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FOBES MEMORIAL LIBRARY, FROM THE VILLAGE GREEN

THE
FOBES MEMORIAL LIBRARY

OAKHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

WITH THE ADDRESSES AT THE LAYING OF
THE CORNER-STONE AND AT
THE DEDICATION



PREPARED AT THE REQUEST OF THE LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE

BY

HENRY P. WRIGHT

OAKHAM, MASS.

1909

2783
D11

Sign

TO THE PEOPLE OF OAKHAM
THIS LITTLE BOOK IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
WITH GRATEFUL APPRECIATION OF MANY ACTS OF
KINDNESS AND SYMPATHY

CONTRIBUTIONS

Mr. CHARLES A. FOBES,	\$4,000.00
Mrs. CELIA E. FOBES,	3,000.00
Mrs. HARRIET F. GIFFORD,	3,000.00

The building lot was presented to the town by
Miss SUSAN F. FAIRBANK
and Mrs. MARIA T. RUGG.

Much of the grading was contributed by the farmers of Oakham.

The cost of the building, including the furnishing, was \$10,354.28.

The corner-stone was laid on Wednesday, August 7, 1907.

The building was dedicated on Thursday, August 27, 1908.

PREFATORY NOTE

Perhaps no movement in the history of the town of Oakham has equaled in importance that which resulted in the erection of the Fobes Memorial Library. It is due to the donors of the building, and also to the town, that a permanent record of the events connected with the erection and dedication of this Library should be made. The Building Committee, at a meeting held in the new reading room on Wednesday, September 2, 1908, voted to request me to prepare and publish, at my convenience, the addresses at the laying of the corner-stone, and at the dedication, together with some account of the building, and the gifts received for library purposes. I have considered it a privilege to render this service to the town to whose good influences I owe so much.

Great care has been taken to make the historical part accurate in all details. Numerous footnotes have been introduced, and copies of some original documents will be found among the *Addenda*.

The three papers by Mr. Shaw, Dr. Tappan, and Dr. Peloubet, on pages 65-86, must be valuable to any librarian whose chief aim is to make his library serve, in the best possible way, the people of the town in which it is located.

I acknowledge my obligations to the many who have helped me, and especially to Miss Emily K. Fobes, who, with untiring patience, has searched records and papers in Worcester for items about the early history of Oakham.

H. P. W.

OAKHAM, August 16, 1909.

SOME OAKHAM DATES

First settlements within the limits of the town, 1749-50.

Established as Precinct of Rutland West Wing, 1759.

First meeting-house erected, 1761.

District of Oakham organized, June 7, 1762.

Rev. John Strickland ordained and installed over Presbyterian church, April 1, 1768.

Church reorganized after Congregational form, June 23, 1773.

Town of Oakham incorporated, August 23, 1775.

Rev. Daniel Tomlinson ordained and settled over Congregational church, June 22, 1786.

New meeting-house dedicated, 1815.

The north village first called Coldbrook, 1832.

Rev. James Kimball ordained and installed, December 26, 1832.

Methodist meeting-house dedicated, October 1, 1843.

Congregational meeting-house remodeled; dedicated, February 12, 1846.

Rev. Francis N. Peloubet installed, December 26, 1860.

Ware River Railroad opened, October, 1873.

Memorial Hall dedicated, January 1, 1875.

Central Massachusetts Railroad opened, December, 1887.

Town clock, presented by Mr. Henry E. Dean, dedicated, August 30, 1905.

Fobes Memorial Library dedicated, August 27, 1908.

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FOBES MEMORIAL LIBRARY, FROM THE TOWN COMMON



THE FOBES MEMORIAL LIBRARY

THE LIBRARY LOT

The steady growth of the public library, with the accumulation of valuable historical documents, has for several years forced upon the attention of the people of Oakham the need of a suitable library building. Mr. Charles M. Packard did much to keep this subject in mind by suggesting, both publicly and privately, ways in which the end might be accomplished. Mr. Amory J. Holden, when President of the Village Improvement Society, made a proposition for a library building and offered a generous contribution. His suggestion was a building of wood, located on the north side of Maple Street and west of the parsonage. The proposition was considered at a dinner following Field Day in 1900, but did not meet with general approval, partly because a fire-proof building was desired, and partly on account of dissatisfaction with the location. Two other sites suggested were, one north of the church facing the village green, and the other on the lot south of Memorial Hall.

The first actual step forward was taken soon after, when Miss Susan F. Fairbank and her sister, Mrs. Maria T. Rugg, offered to give to the town for library purposes the Ephraim Fairbank lot, if funds should be raised for the erection of a library building. This was an appropriate site for a town library on account of its convenient location, facing the village green and near the other public buildings.

At this corner one hundred and forty years ago the first schoolhouse in Oakham was erected, and here for nearly sixty years the children of the Center District received such education as the town then afforded. The lot was owned by several men whose names have been closely identified with the history of Oakham. Ephraim Fairbank, grandfather of Miss Fairbank and Mrs. Rugg, purchased it eighty-seven years ago, and an important part of Mr. Fairbank's work in Oakham was done in the blacksmith's shop which stood a few rods south of the present library site. He sold this lot in 1824 to his son, John Barnard Fairbank, who after its purchase owned all the land on the south side of Maple Street, extending to the west line of the Malcolm place. When he transferred his business to Ware in 1833, he sold all his real estate in Oakham to his brother, James Chandler Fairbank. The part of this property which bordered on the town common Mr. Fairbank sold the same year to his brother-in-law, Mr. Phineas Morton, who in the following year sold the present library lot to Mr. Samuel G. Henry. Mr. Henry built here in 1835 the house and shop in which he lived and carried on his business for twenty years. The shop was at first used by him for carriage trimming and the manufacture of harnesses. Later he changed it into a drug store, with a dentist's office adjoining. Mr. Henry removed to Westboro in 1855, and for the next eleven years the place was owned and occupied by Deacon Cheney Reed, who kept a small store in the west end. After Mr. Reed's death in 1866, his son-in-law, Mr. Addison Macullar, senior member of the Boston firm of Macullar, Williams and Parker, made this his summer residence for several years. Mr. Macullar sold it in 1881 to Mr. James F. Robinson, who lived here till 1883. The house was destroyed by fire in 1886, and the land by purchase came again into the possession of the Fairbank family.

The Fairbanks have been an honored family in Oakham for nearly a century. Mr. Ephraim Fairbank came here from New Ipswich, New Hampshire, and was an influential and helpful citizen of the town for nearly twenty years. He removed to Jacksonville, Illinois, in 1837, where he died a few months after, in his sixty-eighth year. His wife was Sarah Chandler of New Ipswich. Few parents have been so highly honored by their descendants.¹ There were in the family four sons and two daughters. The two younger sons, Ephraim Wilder and Daniel Willard, removed to Cincinnati in early life, where they were associated with Mr. Abraham Robinson in the publication of Fox's Book of Martyrs. John Barnard, the eldest son, was a teacher, and was principal of an academy in Stamford, Connecticut, in 1822. He returned to Oakham soon after and remained

¹ Among the descendants of Ephraim Fairbank are Rev. Samuel Bacon Fairbank, D.D., missionary in India from 1836 till his death in 1899; Mrs. William Mellen (Laurana W. Fairbank), at the Zulu mission, Natal, South Africa, from 1851 to 1874; Mrs. Thomas S. Smith (Emily M. Fairbank), missionary in Ceylon; Mrs. Robert A. Hume (Katie Fairbank), missionary in Ahmednagar, India; Rev. Henry Fairbank, missionary in the Marathi mission, India, since 1886; Rev. Edward Fairbank, also missionary in the Marathi mission since 1893; Deacon Daniel Wilder Fairbank, a Trustee of Illinois College; Rev. John Barnard Fairbank, a Congregational minister; Major John Barnard Fairbank, lawyer in Deadwood, S. D.; Dr. Samuel Fairbank Mellen, physician at Hudson River State Hospital, Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; Laura M. Mellen, missionary at the Zulu mission, Natal, South Africa, since 1895; Mrs. James B. McCord (Margaret Mellen), missionary at the Zulu mission, Natal, South Africa; Mrs. Lester Beals (Rose Fairbank), at Wai, Marathi mission; and Mary Darling Fairbank at the Jahansi mission, India. Among the descendants of Ephraim Fairbank there are more than thirty graduates of Amherst, Yale, Illinois, Colorado, Carleton, Troy Polytechnic, Oberlin, Michigan, Mount Holyoke, Smith and Wellesley Colleges. Fifteen or more others have taken partial courses at colleges or collegiate institutions, and several are now pursuing their studies in preparatory schools.

there till 1833. He and James Chandler, second son of Ephraim, purchased from their father the shop that stood near the southwest corner of the common and here engaged in the manufacture of window springs that were sold in this and adjoining states. Later they were partners in the straw-goods business in Oakham, in Ware, Massachusetts, and for about two years in Brooklyn, N. Y. In 1837 John Barnard removed with his family to Jacksonville, Illinois.

James Chandler Fairbank purchased from the estate of John Briant in 1833 the large farm which still remains in the possession of his daughters, Miss Fairbank and Mrs. Rugg. In 1837 he built the great barn, long the pride of the village, which having completed its three score years and ten² was destroyed by lightning on the evening of Saturday, July 18, 1908. There were few movements for the good of the town during his lifetime with which the name of Chandler Fairbank was not connected. For more than thirty years his business was located in Elizabethport, New Jersey, and he spent only a few weeks of each year with his family in Oakham; but when he appeared in town, he set things in motion. The purchase of a parsonage for the Congregational Church, the laying out of a park, the straightening of a town road at his own expense, the planting of shade trees by the highway,—these are a few examples of the enterprises in which he was active when he came home for a brief vacation. Mr. Fairbank was a man of commanding presence, full of life and enthusiasm. He was a large-hearted man, who knew not the meaning of selfishness, a liberal benefactor, gentle and sympathetic, sacrificing his own interests for those of others. Wherever

² "Perhaps it were better to go in thy glory,
Thy structure intact, with no sign of decay;
Thy three score and ten being fully accomplished,
And Providence taking thee kindly away."

Martha B. Wright.

he went, his presence brought sunshine and hope. The following tribute is taken from a letter written after Mr. Fairbank's death in 1877 by Mrs. Susan Labaree, wife of President Benjamin Labaree of Middlebury College:

"I was but a girl when the Fairbanks came from New Ipswich to Oakham, but I remember them well, a family of brothers, all enterprising and influential. They put new life into the town, and new ideas into the minds of many, ideas of good-will, kindness and helpfulness, and they all fulfilled the rich promise of their youth. The world is better for them, and will be in ages yet to come."

Ephraim Fairbank was a descendant in the sixth generation of Jonathan Fairbank, who was born in England before 1600, came to Boston in 1633, and settled in Dedham about three years later.

Jonathan Fairbank built the well known *Fairbank House* in Dedham which is still standing, and is the oldest dwelling-house in New England that, for the same period of time, has been continuously owned and occupied by the builder and his lineal descendants.

His third son, Jonas, born before the family came to America, removed from Dedham to Lancaster in 1657, and was "one of the fathers of the town." He was killed by the Indians February 10, 1676, during a raid upon the settlement.

Captain Jabez Fairbank, the son of Jonas, lived during all his life in Lancaster. He was a very efficient soldier and officer in the Indian Wars, and a famous Indian scout. He died at the age of eighty-four.

His second son, Jonas, lived also in Lancaster, where he died at the age of eighty-nine. He was a soldier in the French and Indian Wars.

Josiah, the eldest son of Jonas, was born in Lancaster and removed to Sterling. He was a soldier in the Colonial and Revolutionary Wars.

His third son, Ephraim, was born in Sterling, March 16, 1770, and removed to New Ipswich, N. H., where he was married in 1795. About twenty years later he came with his family to Oakham.

THE MEMORIAL BUILDING

In the spring of 1905 Mr. Charles Ames Fobes of Peter-sham left to the town of Oakham by will a legacy of four thousand dollars for a library building. This legacy was supplemented in the summer of 1906 by a gift of six thousand dollars from Mrs. Celia Elizabeth Fobes of Worcester and her daughter, Mrs. Harriet Fobes Gifford of Tarrytown, N. Y.

At a meeting held April 2, 1906, the town

Voted, to accept the legacy of four thousand dollars from the estate of the late Charles A. Fobes for the erection of a library building in memory of his father, P. Ames Fobes;

and the selectmen, Harry B. Parker, Gardner M. Dean, and John P. Day, with George W. Stone and Charles M. Packard, were chosen a Library Committee, of which Gardner M. Dean was made treasurer. On November 6 of the same year the town

Voted, that the Library Committee be instructed to accept in behalf of the town the gift of six thousand dollars from Mrs. Celia E. Fobes and Mrs. Harriet F. Gifford toward the erection of a library building, and to express the hearty thanks of the town therefor to the donors.

At the same meeting the Library Committee was directed to procure and present to the town, at or before the next annual meeting, plans and specifications for the new building. On March 23, 1907, the town

Voted unanimously that the Fobes Memorial Library be built of field-stone,

and the building committee was instructed to exhibit the plans of the different architects to Mrs. Fobes, Mrs. Gifford, Miss Fairbank and Mrs. Rugg, and to report their preference to the town. The Committee was also requested to prepare and present to the town, at a meeting to be held in April, reliable sketches and figures. At this meeting, April 22, 1907, the town

Voted, to accept and adopt the report of the Library Building Committee recommending the plans of The Fuller and Delano Company,

and also instructed the Committee to advertise for sealed bids. The contract was awarded to Mr. J. P. Keating, of Westboro, Massachusetts. Work on the Library building was begun Wednesday, June 19, 1907, and the corner-stone was laid with appropriate ceremonies on August 7 of the same year. The corner-stone was taken from the old Fobes farm in the west part of the town. In it were placed:—a sealed box containing a copy of the last town report, including the Library report; copies of Boston and Worcester dailies; a copy of the *Oakham Herald*; a copy of the *Barre Gazette*, giving an account of the dedication of the town clock; maps of the villages of Oakham and Coldbrook, with names of the occupants of the several houses; letter-heads and bill-heads of all firms doing business in Oakham and Coldbrook; names of the Library Trustees, of the Library Building Committee, the architects, and the contractor; several coins of 1907; genealogy of the Oakham branch of the Fobes family, and photographs of Mr. Charles A. Fobes, Mr. Hiram Fobes, and Mr. Hiram Nye Fobes.

THE LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE

EXERCISES
AT THE
LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE
OF THE
FOBES MEMORIAL LIBRARY,
OAKHAM, MASSACHUSETTS,

HELD ON THE VILLAGE GREEN, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 1907.

PRESIDENT OF THE DAY,
MR. HARRY B. PARKER, *Chairman of the Library Building
Committee.*

CHOIR: Deacon JESSE ALLEN, *Leader.*

Mrs. JOHN W. DWELLY.	Miss MABEL E. CONANT.
Mrs. WALTER A. WOODIS.	Mr. WILLIAM S. CRAWFORD.
Miss EVA S. ALLEN.	Mr. FRANK E. DAVIS.

1. HYMN—"God Bless Our Native Land."
2. Prayer by Deacon HORACE W. LINCOLN, of Oakham.
3. HYMN—"Italian Hymn."
4. Address, by Dean HENRY P. WRIGHT, of New Haven, Connecticut.
5. Laying the corner-stone, by Mr. HENRY C. FOBES, of Oakham.
6. HYMN—"America," by the audience.

HISTORICAL ADDRESS

BY HENRY P. WRIGHT

One hundred and fifteen years ago there came to Oakham from Bridgewater a man in the prime of life, with his wife, four years younger, and one son, a boy of nine years. The man was Joseph Fobes, who was born in Bridgewater in 1758, and who had served in the Revolutionary War as a private in various campaigns between August, 1776, and August, 1780. He was a descendant in the fifth generation of John Fobes from Duxbury, who was one of the original proprietors and first settlers of Bridgewater, where he died in 1660.¹ The wife of Joseph Fobes was Susanna, daughter of Captain John Ames of Bridgewater, a descendant in the fifth generation of the John Ames who came from Bruton, Somersetshire, England, and settled in Bridgewater as early as 1640.

Oakham was indebted to Bridgewater for some of its best families. Jesse Allen removed from Bridgewater to Oakham in 1770 and was followed by his brother, Nehemiah Allen (in 1778), and by his brothers-in-law, Ichabod Packard (in 1771) and Captain Jonathan Willis (in 1786); also by Captain James Conant (in 1778) and his brother, Luther Conant (not later than 1783), by Ebenezer Whitman (in 1778), Nehemiah Packard, son of Ichabod (not later than 1780), and John Hooper (not later than 1790). All of these had settled here before Mr. Fobes came, and, as he was connected by marriage with the Packard and Willis families, without doubt he came to Oakham because they were already here. Later came also Ensign Nathan Willis (in 1795), Calvin Edson (in 1796), Thomas Conant (not later than 1796), Amos Keith (in 1802), and Jonas Leonard

¹ See p. 95.

(not later than 1804). These Bridgewater families were all more or less closely connected by marriage. They were of good stock and became prominent members of the new community and a power for good in it. Their influence has been an unspeakable blessing to the town, and their descendants have been among its foremost citizens and benefactors.

When the first Bridgewater families came to Oakham this town had been recently opened for settlement. They preferred it to the new towns in Vermont to which many Massachusetts families were then removing, because it was not far distant from their old homes in Bridgewater. The northern part of Worcester County was settled many years after the towns near the sea coast, and also later than the towns on the Connecticut River. Transportation was comparatively easy to towns on the coast and on the river, but there was greater difficulty in reaching the remote hill towns, where the only means of carriage was on horseback. When in 1731 it was proposed in the General Court of Massachusetts to constitute the county of Worcester, Thomas Hutchinson, afterwards Governor Hutchinson, strenuously opposed it, "urging the utter improbability of its ever making any figure."² No settlement was made within the present limits of the town of Oakham until about 1750, thirty-four years after the first land was cleared for settlement in Rutland, only five miles to the east, and about a hundred years after the settlement of Bridgewater.³

² Whitney's *History of Worcester County*, p. 20, note.

³ The first settlers of Rutland held the Pine Plains (between Rutland and Oakham) in common, and often used the unoccupied land in the West Wing (Oakham) as pasture land for their cattle through the summer. It was their custom to set fires here late in the autumn to improve the pasturage. This is said to have injured the appearance of the land and to have delayed the sale of the farms in Oakham for several years.

It may be of interest to go back to the year 1792 that we may get some idea of this region as Joseph Fobes saw it when he first came here. The population of Worcester County was then about fifty-seven thousand, less than one-half of the population of the City of Worcester to-day. The people were pretty evenly distributed over the county, there being no city and no very large towns. The largest town in the county was Brookfield, including what is now North and West Brookfield, with a population of about three thousand, and containing three churches. Sutton ranked second, with a population of about twenty-seven hundred, and having two churches; while Worcester had a population of only about two thousand and had just settled a minister over what became the second parish, but which was not yet incorporated. Hardwick was the sixth town in the county in population and importance, and Barre the seventh. Rutland, Hubbardston, and New Braintree were about equal in size, each having a population of about one thousand. The inhabitants of Gardner numbered less than six hundred.

The town of Oakham had then been incorporated sixteen years. Its population already numbered seven hundred and seventy-five, or more than one-third of that of Worcester. In 1790, at the time of the first census of the United States, there were one hundred and twenty-three families in Oakham. One-third of these had six or more children each, and at least eight families had ten or more. The average number of children in a family was somewhat more than four. People did not then gather in villages. Nearly every man, whatever his trade or profession, lived on a farm. There were only three dwelling-houses where our village now stands. Thomas Harmon, a surveyor of some local repute, had been employed by the precinct in 1759 to find the center of the township, and this survey had determined the location of the common, the burying ground, and the



VIEW FROM THE LIBRARY WINDOWS, LOOKING SOUTH

meeting-house. The burying ground was surrounded by a stone wall, with a gate in the center of the south side. Just east of the pathway leading to this gate, a few feet from the wall, and a little northeast of the site of Memorial Hall, was the meeting-house which had been erected in 1761.⁴ About two rods east of the spot where Mr. Henry Fobes will to-day lay the corner-stone of the new library stood the center schoolhouse,⁵ erected in 1769 but not entirely finished in 1793.⁶ There was nothing else in the vicinity of the meeting-house, to mark the center of the town, except the pound south of the schoolhouse, the horsesheds at the northwest corner of the common, and the stocks. The stocks, built in 1785, were appropriately located near the wall of the burying ground, east of the meeting-house, on the spot where the tramp house was erected in 1893. They served as a warning to evil-doers, but there is no record or tradition to show that they were ever used to punish offenders. On the common, south of the meeting-house, stood at least two venerable oaks, under which on pleasant Sundays in summer the young people gathered between the morning and afternoon services.

There were five dwelling-houses about equally distant from the meeting-house: (1) on the south, the house of the Rev. Daniel Tomlinson, still standing; (2) on the north, the house of William Tufts (innholder in 1794), where Mr. Sibley F. Woodis now lives; (3) on the opposite side of

⁴ The east end of the old meeting-house was six rods from the east line of the common, and the north side was twelve rods from the north line of the burying ground. *Map of the Common*, by Charles M. Packard.

⁵ "The first schoolhouse in Oakham was located about one rod east of the west boundary line of the common, and about one rod south of the road leading west from the old meeting-house." Charles M. Packard, in the *Records of the East Center School District Association*, p. 1.

⁶ See p. 24.

the street from Mr. Tufts', the house in which Mr. Frank E. Davis now lives; (4) on the west, a house occupied by Jonathan Bullard, Jr., at the Fairbank place; and (5) on the east, a house belonging to William Tufts.

The first four houses had been recently built. The last was the first house on the farm of one hundred and sixty-seven acres owned by William Tufts, later known as the Noyes place. This farm extended northwardly from the farm of the Rev. Daniel Tomlinson to that of Alpheus Stone, now Mr. Wallace Grimes's, and westwardly from the line near the east side of Miss Laura G. Burt's farm to the west line of lot number eleven, now marked by Prospect Street.⁷ William Tufts owned at that time all the land now occupied by the village of Oakham except the part south of Maple and west of Prospect streets, and this early house stood upon the old road leading from the meeting-house to the Foster tavern (now William Nye's), and on to the Craige tavern (in Coldbrook). This road ran between Meeting-house Hill and the hill now called Briggs Hill, and passed along the south side of Briggs Hill, turning then to the north. The old house was located on the north side of the road, about twenty rods east of the large oak now standing on the south slope of Briggs Hill.

Beyond the Tufts tavern were the houses of Alpheus Stone, and Captain Isaac Stone, now the Adams place. West of the house occupied by Jonathan Bullard, Jr., the first dwelling was that of Edwin Partridge, where Mr. Charles Trowbridge now lives.

Besides the Craige, Foster, and Tufts taverns already noticed, there were about this time at least two other inns within the limits of the town, one kept by Captain Joseph Chaddock from 1777 to 1796 at the Mullett place, and one in the southeast part of the town on the farm later owned

⁷ The Tomlinson and the Tufts farms together contained all the land in lot number eleven.

by Governor Levi Lincoln. This latter inn was kept at the time of the Revolution by James Ames, and after 1785 by John Gould. There was a store at the Lewis Haskell place, then occupied by Deacon Jesse Allen, the grandfather of our present townsman of the same name and title.

The road between the present Library Corner and the east end of the Bell road (later known as the Davis road) was not built till about forty-five years later. The old south road came, in a line nearly straight, past the house of the Rev. Daniel Tomlinson up to the front of the meeting-house. Mr. Tomlinson, then thirty-three years of age, had been settled over the church six years.

Household utensils and farming tools that were wholly or partly of iron were generally manufactured by the blacksmiths, of whom there were several in different parts of the town. Most of the garments for men and women were made at home from cloth spun and woven from wool and flax in the household. The town tailor, William Batt, an Englishman, who made Sunday clothes for gentlemen, lived a mile and a half west of the meeting-house, on the south side of the road leading to the house now occupied by Mr. Clayton Adams. The shoemaker visited the different households once a year and remained with each long enough to fit the family out with shoes to last for the next twelve months.

Town meetings were held in the meeting-house, and, by vote of the town, warrants for the same were posted on the meeting-house door. After election of the town officers at the regular March meeting, it was the custom to adjourn immediately to some tavern, where those newly elected took the oath of office, and of course paid for the drinks for the company. All further business was then postponed till the April meeting.⁸

⁸ From the town records:

March 5, 1792. "Voted to adjourn this meeting for one hour to Landlord Foster's."

The people seem to have been fond of town meetings and of the chance thereby offered to discuss and vote. There were five such meetings in 1792.⁹ Some of the votes passed during this and the following years were:

"Voted to raise 11 pounds, 2 shillings and 9 pence 2 farthings to be assessed on the polls and Estates in the Center School plot, in order to enable them to finish off the school-house in said plot."¹⁰

"Voted to allow the committee 1 pound and 6 shillings for repairing the burying yard wall."¹¹

"Voted not to dig any well on the meeting-house commons."¹²

In the north part of the town, on Cold Brook stream, which flows from Muddy Pond into the Ware River, there were two sawmills, one near the site of the mill long operated by Mr. Daniel M. Parker, but above the railroad crossing, and the second on the old mill road. In the south part of the town, on the Five-Mile River, was a sawmill, on the

March 3, 1793. "Voted to adjourn this meeting for half an hour to Captain Chaddock's."

March 2, 1795. "Voted to adjourn this meeting for one hour to William Tufts'. Met according to adjournment, and after swearing those chosen into office, ETC., voted that this meeting be now dissolved."

March 6, 1797. "Voted to adjourn this meeting fifteen minutes to the house of William Tufts, innholder."

Feb. 18, 1798. "Voted that this meeting be adjourned for half an hour to the house of Artemus Howe." (Mr. Howe followed Mr. Tufts at the Noyes place.)

⁹ On March 5, April 2, May 14, September 24, and November 3.

¹⁰ This schoolhouse had been built twenty-three years, and was still unfinished.

¹¹ See p. 21.

¹² The town well was dug in the winter of 1835 by the young men in the village, who worked in it at night without pay. The purpose was to have at hand an adequate supply of water for the village in case of fire.

site of the present mill of Mr. Walter Dean, and a mile below was a gristmill known as the Bothwell mill.¹³

There were very few mail facilities in those days. In 1789 there were only seventy-five post offices in the United States. For the inhabitants of Oakham the nearest post office was Worcester, and postage, within the limits of the United States, was from six to twenty-five cents, according to distance, to be paid in specie.¹⁴ These obstacles were enough to discourage frequent correspondence, and letters were not always welcome visitors, as the postage was generally to be paid by the recipient.

There were four important roads running through the town: one from Petersham and Barre to Rutland and Worcester; this went past the Craige tavern in what is now Coldbrook and along the old road to Rutland by the Folly tavern, which was situated just beyond the Rutland line, and north of Muddy Pond. The second ran from Rutland to Brookfield, with an inn at Reed Corner kept by Capt. Joseph Chaddock. The third was located near the south side of the town. This came from New Braintree, continued through Paxton, to Worcester, and was sometimes called "the new county road." The fourth, also a county road, ran from Worcester, through Rutland, to Hardwick, and continued on to Hadley and Northampton. Over this road Eleazer Barrows, a well-known post-rider of the day, was

¹³ This mill had been sold in 1778 by Thomas Mann to John Bothwell and has ever since remained in possession of the Bothwell family.

¹⁴ The postal rates at this time were:

For 30 miles and under.....	6	cents
Between 30 and 60 miles.....	8	"
Between 60 and 100 miles.....	10	"
Between 100 and 150 miles.....	12½	"
Between 150 and 450 miles.....	15 to 22	"
Over 450 miles.....	25	"

at this period making his weekly trips on horseback from Worcester to Northampton and back, distributing to his customers along the route their weekly newspapers and letters, and giving them the advantages of a private rural delivery.

The road from Hardwick to Rutland was destined to become in a short time the most important road in town. There was travel over this route before the town of Oakham was settled (in 1750). As early as 1730 the proprietors of Rutland made a grant of land for the part of this road from Rutland Center to the line of Rutland West Wing (later the town of Oakham), and called it the Hadley road. Hardwick was settled in 1732 and there must have been travel over this road between Hardwick and Rutland from this time on. October 30, 1733, the proprietors of Hardwick voted to build "a good cart bridge" where the Hadley road crossed the Ware River. Ebenezer Foster located in 1756 on the farm on which Mr. William Nye now lives and established an inn there, known widely as the Foster Tavern, not later than 1761, in which year he was called innholder in the precinct records. As there was then no house within a mile north or east of Mr. Foster's, if there had not been at that time considerable travel over this road there would have been no occasion for an inn. In the records of the first meeting called by the selectmen for the purpose of laying out highways, and held March 9, 1767, this road is frequently referred to as "the county road from Hardwick to Rutland." At the time of the Revolution this, like all other roads in Oakham, was little more than a horsepath, difficult for the passage of carts or sleds. Twenty years later it was said to be "bad and almost impassible for carriages, from the roughness of the country, which in many places is uneven, hilly, and very rocky."¹⁵

¹⁵ Petition to the Massachusetts Legislature to establish the Sixth Massachusetts Turnpike, May, 1798.

In November, 1777, the prisoners from Burgoyne's army marched from Saratoga through Hadley to Cambridge, and in preference to this direct route from Hadley to Shrewsbury took the longer Bay road through Palmer, Brookfield, and Leicester, since that would better allow the passage of the wagons that followed them. But over this older route the officers' mattresses, bedding and much other baggage were carried on horseback.¹⁶ It should be remembered that at this period every one in this part of the country rode horseback who rode at all, and that goods were brought from Boston to these inland towns on horseback, or rarely on two-wheeled carts or sleds. There were not a half dozen four-wheeled wagons in any town, perhaps not in all the towns, between Hadley and Worcester in 1792.¹⁷ In 1786, Ichabod Packard brought Rev. Mr. Tomlinson, his wife and their goods all the way from Derby, Connecticut, to Oakham (about a hundred miles) on a sled drawn by a yoke of oxen. Mr. Packard wore on this expedition a new sheepskin apron, finished for the occasion.

This Hadley road was a short route from Boston to the upper Connecticut River towns and to Vermont, and travel over it increased. The part between Amherst and Shrewsbury was rebuilt by a private corporation in accordance with an act passed by the legislature June 21, 1799, and formed the Sixth Massachusetts Turnpike. This turnpike was to be not less than four rods wide, and the path for travel not less than eighteen feet wide in any place. It was to connect at Northampton with a turnpike already constructed

¹⁶ "There came on a very heavy fall of snow. After this it is impossible to describe the confusion that ensued, carts breaking down, others sticking fast, some oversetting, horses tumbling with their loads of baggage." Anburry, *Travels in America*, Vol. II, p. 39.

¹⁷ The first four-wheeled wagon in Oakham was owned by Johnny Long, who lived on the Macomber place.

that extended from that town to the New York state line and thus form "a direct line of communication from Boston to Albany." At this period the object in road-building seems to have been to make the distance as short as possible, without much regard to the grade. The Old Turnpike was a hilly road. It passed through Oakham about a mile north of the meeting-house, in a line nearly straight, going up and down the steep hills west of Mr. Gaffney's and east of Mr. Nye's, continued up to the center of Rutland, and thence down through Holden, and on through the north part of Worcester to the great road in Shrewsbury which led from New York to Boston. For things that could not be made in town or bought at the country store, people in this region went to Boston to trade in those days, and not to Worcester. Farm produce also was carried to Boston to market. Much of the Boston traffic from Hardwick, Enfield, Amherst, Northampton, and the towns adjacent and beyond, passed over this road.¹⁸ Frederick Augustus Presho, who ninety years ago kept an inn and store where the turnpike crosses the Coldbrook road, in the house which Mr. Alec Grimes now has for his summer residence, used to say that he had often put up over night as many as thirty horses at a time belonging to teamsters and travellers on the Old Turnpike.

When Joseph Fobes came to Oakham in 1792, his purpose was to locate here as a merchant or an innkeeper. He first offered to purchase a building lot on the town common, southeast of the meeting-house, and open a store there. The

¹⁸The rates of toll were: for a two-horse carriage, 25 cents; for a cart or wagon drawn by two oxen, 12½ cents; for a vehicle drawn by one horse, 12½ cents; for a horse and rider, 5 cents; for a sled drawn by two oxen or horses, 9 cents; for a sled drawn by one horse, 6 cents; for horses or cattle driven or led, 1 cent each; for sheep or swine, 3 cents per dozen.

proposition was discussed in town meeting March 5, 1792, and it was decided not to sell.¹⁹ Why he selected this location when there were others to the north and west of the common more desirable for his purpose, it is difficult to say, but it is not unlikely that those who owned the more desirable sites were not willing to sell. It is perhaps worth noting that, had the town accepted his offer, Mr. Fobes's store would probably have been located within one hundred feet of the spot on which the Fobes Memorial Library is now being erected. What other plans he had in mind, we do not know; but in February, 1793, in company with David Ames, a blacksmith and gunsmith of Bridgewater, his brother-in-law, he purchased from Richard Kelley the Craige tavern (in what is now Coldbrook) and all the land formerly belonging to Captain Joseph Craige, and also purchased at the same time the sawmill formerly owned by Aaron Parmenter. The property thus acquired included three hundred and twenty-five acres of land, with three houses, four barns, a sawmill and a blacksmith shop. There was already considerable business in this section of the town. Over the road from Rutland to Barre, known as the Boston and Barre post road, there was much travel. Here was located the Craige tavern and here was "as durable a stream as in the county," that furnished power to two sawmills and to the fulling-mill owned by Lewis Abbott and Peter Wilder. This mill had a good set of carding machines and was supplied with all the utensils necessary for carrying on the clothier's business. Here also at this time or a little later was a trip-hammer shop with four fireplaces.

¹⁹ Article 11 in the warrant for town meeting on March 5, 1792, was "to see if the Town will Vote to sell a piece of the Commons near the pound to Joseph Fobes to set up a store." When this article was reached, it was "Voted not to sell any of the Town Commons at present."

The Craige and Kelley tavern, established in 1750 (on the spot where the Bemis Hotel now stands) and kept by Joseph Craige till his death in 1781, and by Richard Kelley from this date to 1793, now became the Fobes tavern. The position of innkeeper in America at this period was one of great respectability and influence. To be an innkeeper in Massachusetts, one must be recommended by the selectmen of the town and get the approval of the Court of Sessions, and only men of correct habits, who were courteous and accommodating, were likely to be recommended.²⁰

The firm of Ames and Fobes, merchants, was formed and a store was opened in a new building on the corner where Clark Hall is now located. Mr. Ames did not remain long in Oakham. His family never resided here. He had been a manufacturer of agricultural tools and also an armorer in Bridgewater, and had furnished shovels and guns to the American army. When in 1794 Congress passed a bill establishing a national armory at Springfield, President Washington appointed him superintendent. The first musket made by the United States was finished at Springfield under his superintendency in 1795. Alexander Crawford, who went with Mr. Ames from Oakham, made the first gunlock, and also shared with Mr. Richard Beebe the honor of stocking the first guns.²¹ Mr. Ames did not give up his business in Oakham till 1798, when on January 10 the partnership of Ames and Fobes was dissolved. The

²⁰ See p. 102.

²¹ Mason A. Green says that Mr. Crawford made the first gunlock, and that Mr. Beebe stocked the first gun. Mr. Crawford told his grandson, Captain John G. Crawford, that he and Mr. Beebe were each given a gun to stock, and that as he finished his work sooner than Mr. Beebe he might also claim to have stocked the first gun.

inn and other property purchased from Richard Kelley in 1793 had been sold back to Mr. Kelley during the preceding year.²² January 18, 1799, Mr. Fobes purchased from Nathan Willis the farm on the Hadley road now owned and occupied by Mr. Patrick O'Donnell, and he and his descendants down to the third generation lived on the farm, except for a short period, till 1895.

Mr. Fobes selected this location partly to be near other Bridgewater families who lived on the Hadley road and in the west and southwest part of the town. The soil, also, of this region was productive and easy to cultivate. But he was influenced chiefly in his choice of a location by the proposition to rebuild this county road, making it a turn-pike, thus opening a comfortable thoroughfare between Boston and Northampton, and on to the towns beyond.²³

²² David Ames was born in Bridgewater in 1768 and died in Springfield in August, 1847. He was the first superintendent of the Springfield armory and held that office till the end of John Adams's administration. In 1802 Joseph Morgan was appointed by Jefferson to succeed him. After leaving the armory, Mr. Ames turned his attention to the manufacture of paper. He began business in a little factory on Mill River. In 1827 he secured control of the mill at Chicopee Falls, and soon became proprietor of the largest paper manufactory in the country in his day. He made many improvements in the process of paper manufacturing, and first devised the process of hot pressing which afterwards came into general use. David Ames became one of the wealthy men of Springfield. He owned the only piano in Springfield in 1810. His subscription to the fund in 1819 for purchasing land in front of the Springfield meeting-house for a town common was among the four highest on the list. Mason A. Green, *Springfield, 1636-1886*, pp. 356 and 476; *History of the Connecticut Valley*, Vol. II, p. 844; Green's *Springfield Memories*; and Charles W. Chapin's *Sketch of Old Inhabitants of Springfield*.

²³ The petition to the legislature was proposed in May, 1798, but as it was late in the season it was not presented till the following winter.

No doubt it was generally expected that this would become and long remain one of the important lines of travel through the state from east to west. Otherwise prudent men would not have invested in the turnpike shares, hoping for a large return in dividends and an increase in the value of the stock.²⁴

The section of Oakham through which the turnpike passed was for many years the most important portion of the town. Here were located the town physicians, Dr. Spencer Field and his son, Dr. John Field. On this road within the limits of the town there was always during this period one or more inns, and the largest store in Oakham stood at the corner where the turnpike crosses the Coldbrook road. The school in the west district surpassed the school in the center, both in the amount of money expended and in the number of scholars, having sometimes in the winter season an attendance of one hundred pupils. The increasing travel over the turnpike made this also the busiest part of the town, and when a post office was established in Oakham it seemed entirely proper to locate it on the turnpike and in the west district, though this was nearly two miles northwest of the meeting-house. April 1, 1813, Joseph Fobes was appointed first postmaster of Oakham. To his house for eleven years people from all parts of the town used to go or send once a week to get their mail. For the first five years the mail was carried either by a post-rider or in a one-horse wagon. In 1818 Cyrus Stockwell established a stage line from Worcester to Northampton, running once a week each way.²⁵ This mail stage started from Hardwick

²⁴ In their offer of stock to the public the proprietors said that, as the turnpike from Northampton to the New York State line had already returned seven to nine per cent., the income from this would of course be proportionately greater, as it was less expensive to build.

²⁵ See p. 104.

at 8 A. M. on Tuesdays, passed the Oakham post office about 11, and reached Worcester in the afternoon. Returning, it left Worcester at 9 A. M. on Wednesdays, passed the Oakham post office about 2, and reached Hardwick in the afternoon. On Thursday morning it left Hardwick for Northampton and returned to Hardwick on Friday. On January 1, 1824, this stage began running twice a week each way. Starting from Northampton at 5 A. M., it reached Worcester in the afternoon in season to connect with the stage from New York, and arrive in Boston the same day.²⁶

Mr. Fobes held the office of postmaster till March 1, 1824, when he was followed by George Fay, who transferred the office to the center of the town, where he kept an inn and store. This change in the location of the post office was followed a few years later by the practical abandonment of business over the Old Turnpike, which was diverted to roads through the valley that were easier to travel.²⁷ The transfer of the post office marks also the beginning of village life in the center of the town. Mr. Fobes's signboard as innkeeper at the Craige tavern and his old post office boxes were preserved until within a few years and are well remembered by persons still living. On the signboard, according to the custom of the day, was painted a portrait supposed to represent General Washington. The post office was a peculiar piece of furniture, a sort of high table, with drawers and pigeon-holes above.

Mr. Fobes was a man of dignified bearing, respected for his ability and worth, and well meriting the title "gentle-

²⁶ *Worcester Spy*, December 31, 1823.

²⁷ The Old Turnpike was wholly abandoned for through travel when, in accordance with more scientific methods of road-building, the county road was constructed along the valley from Old Furnace through Coldbrook and West Rutland. The part lying just south of Muddy Pond and towards the Rutland line, though still a public road, is now wholly unused.

man." Both in Bridgewater and Oakham he was always "Esquire Fobes." In a list of sixty-five names of the proprietors of the Oakham Social Library he was the only one to be thus distinguished.

The son already mentioned, who came to Oakham at the age of nine years, was Peres Fobes, who was born in Bridgewater April 11, 1783. He was named for his uncle, Rev. Perez Fobes, LL.D., who was graduated at Harvard in 1762 and was settled at Raynham from 1776 till 1812.²⁸ He was at one time Vice President of Brown University, then called Brown College, and Acting President in 1786 while Dr. James Manning, the President, was serving as representative in the American Congress.²⁹ Peres Fobes the younger was designed by his father for a professional career. His uncle's marked success naturally suggested the ministry. He studied under Rev. Dr. John Crane of Northbridge, a graduate of Harvard, and fitted himself

²⁸ Rev. Perez Fobes was born in Bridgewater September 21, 1742, and died at Raynham February 15, 1812. He was ordained to the Congregational ministry in 1766, and was Chaplain in the Continental Army in 1777. He was the author of the *History of Raynham* (1794); *Scripture Catechism* (1804), and an abridgement of the same (1809).

²⁹ "Dr. Manning was by a unanimous resolution of the General Assembly appointed at its March session in 1786 to represent Rhode Island in the Congress of the Confederation. * * * At a special meeting of the Trustees and Fellows, held at his house March 13, his request for absence was granted, and the Rev. Perez Fobes, LL.D., pastor of the Congregational Church and Society in Raynham, Mass., was appointed to take charge of the institution from June 1 to September 1, as its Vice President. He accepted the appointment and discharged the duties of the place with fidelity and good success. Shortly afterwards, it may be added, he was appointed Professor of Natural Philosophy, which position he occupied twelve years, coming in from Raynham once or twice a week during portions of the year to deliver lectures. In 1795 he was elected one of the Fellows of the College." *Guild's Manning and Brown University*, Boston, 1864, pp. 378-380.

for Brown, but did not enter. For some reason not now known he gave up the chance of a college education and lived with his father on the farm. Seth Fobes, his cousin, and of the same age, was graduated at Brown in 1804. He studied medicine and settled as a physician in Oakham.³⁰ Peres, in 1811, took up for a time the study of medicine under the direction of his cousin, but soon relinquished this also for a life on the farm. He became an active business man and a good citizen, and succeeded his father on the home place. Mr. Fobes was a man of physical and intellectual vigor, dignified, courteous, and not easily moved by argument. He was somewhat prominent in town affairs, having been selectman in 1813, 1814, 1815, 1816, 1833, and 1834.³¹ He was a quiet man, having no quarrels, a good neighbor, fond of children, and especially kind to those in need.

Peres Fobes was married three times and became the father of ten children. Three were daughters, two of whom died in infancy, and one became the wife of Frederick A. Potter

³⁰ Dr. Seth Fobes was son of Alpheus Fobes (brother of Joseph) of Bridgewater, and was born in 1783. In 1805 he came to Oakham from the South Parish of Bridgewater, was married to Abigail Allen, daughter of Deacon Jesse Allen, in August, 1808, and settled on a small farm about one mile west of the meeting-house (the old Brimhall place). He had for the times an extensive library of medical books. He was town clerk of Oakham in 1811. Dr. Fobes was a good physician and was especially successful in treating cases of spotted fever. He was one of the four physicians consulted by Dr. Fisk, when by the direction of the Massachusetts Medical Society he prepared and published a paper on spotted fever, entitled "Observations on the Disease and Mode of Treatment." (*Worcester Spy*, April 18, 1810.) Dr. Fobes died very suddenly January 30, 1816.

³¹ When the Washington Grenadiers were called into active service in the war of 1812, Mr. Fobes, then one of the selectmen, drove the baggage wagon to Boston, and remained in camp with the soldiers till their return.

of North Brookfield. Mr. Potter came to Oakham in 1830, built the store now occupied by Mr. Butler, and did business there for several years. There were seven sons in the Fobes family, and to any one who remembers Oakham as it was in 1850-60 it is enough to name them to show of what material the family was composed.

The eldest son, Joseph, from early life was engaged in mercantile business, chiefly in Barre and Oakham. In 1839 he became senior member of the firm of Fobes, Conant and Company, who kept a general store in Oakham in the present post office building and dealt extensively in farm produce. Two years later he gave up traffic in merchandise and devoted his attention for the remainder of his life to agriculture and cattle-raising, in the latter of which he was especially successful. He was prominent in church and town affairs and very liberal in his gifts to worthy objects, both public and private. He was a friend to the poor and the unfortunate, and ever ready to help those who were ambitious to rise and were willing to help themselves. At his death he left a legacy of two thousand dollars to the Oakham Congregational Church. In the year 1876-77 he represented the district to which Oakham belonged in the Massachusetts legislature. His wife, Mrs. Nancy Burt Fobes, a sister of Mr. Alfred E. Burt, had great power and influence in the community. She was a woman of much culture, possessing unusual social qualities, and had a wide acquaintance with many prominent men and women in whose homes she was always welcome. Among her own towns-people she was universally beloved and trusted, and never refused to go to the aid of any in sickness or sorrow. Of her, Mrs. Louise A. Kellogg has said: "I have met many fine women, but never a greater one than Mrs. Joseph Fobes."

The second son, John, became a farmer and was noted for his untiring industry. After he became of age he





PERES AMES FOBES
1851)

managed the home farm for a time, and afterwards the Deacon Allen place (Mrs. Lewis Haskell's). He removed to Petersham, where he died in his thirtieth year.

Timothy, the third son, spent all his life in Oakham, and a considerable part of it on the home farm. He was a prosperous and thrifty farmer and a good citizen. He never sought office, and had no wish to leave his native town or abandon the calling which he had inherited from his father, but lived a contented and happy life in his pleasant home, surrounded by his family.

Albert, the fourth son, was never strong, and perhaps for this reason was the general favorite of the family. When ten years old he left home to live with his sister, Mrs. Potter, in the center of the town, and spent much of his time in Mr. Potter's store. After Mr. Potter's failure in the panic of 1837, Albert, then fifteen years of age, went to Boston and became clerk in a shoe store. Being in feeble health, he made two visits to the south in the vain hope of recovery. He died suddenly, of tubercular consumption, on board ship off Mobile, in his twenty-second year, and was buried at Mobile.

Peres Ames Fobes, the fifth son, and the one in whose honor the first gift towards the erection of this memorial building was made, received his middle name from his grandmother, who was Susanna Ames of Bridgewater. When about ten years of age he went to live with his brother Joseph at Smithville (in Barre) and naturally grew up to be a merchant. For a short period he was clerk in the village store in New Braintree. His affability and recognized business capacity secured him, in his twenty-third year, a partnership with two veterans in trade, James K. Hervey and Edmund Dean. The new firm, called Hervey, Fobes and Company, had a large and prosperous store in the brick building now owned and occupied by Mrs. Bushnell. This building had formerly been the center schoolhouse.

An addition was now built on the north side, which some years later was purchased by Mr. John Parker, the village tailor, who lived where Mr. Conant now resides. Mr. Parker moved his purchase to the lot next to his house, on the east, and it has since been greatly enlarged. It was for some years a tailor's shop and afterwards became the wire-work manufactory of Mr. Lewis Dean. It is now the store and telephone exchange of Mr. Frank Conant.

During the period when the firm of Hervey, Fobes and Company was doing business on one side of the village green a new sign appeared on the front door of a house opposite, "P. and M. Gates, Millinery Rooms." The Misses Pamela and Mary Gates had come down from Petersham and had opened millinery rooms on the second floor, front, of the Samuel G. Henry house. Miss Pamela Gates was soon engaged to teach school in the west center district, and a cousin was brought down from Petersham to assist Miss Mary in her work. The visit, for purely business purposes, proved more eventful than was anticipated. This cousin, who was Elizabeth Gates, here first met Ames Fobes, whose wife she became on September 18, 1850.

The firm of Hervey, Fobes and Company was dissolved in 1852. Ames Fobes went west and located as a merchant in Marion, Iowa, where he lived for about twelve years. Here was born, May 12, 1859, Charles Ames Fobes, to whom the town is indebted for the first gift of four thousand dollars for the structure whose corner-stone we lay to-day. Ames returned to Oakham and died in 1866 in the house where he had first met Elizabeth Gates and which stood on the site of the memorial building which is to bear the family name. After his father's death, Charles removed with his mother to her old home in Petersham. When he became a man, he, like his father and three of his uncles, engaged in trade, becoming at the age of nine-



MRS. ELIZABETH GATES FOBES
(1867)

teen a member of the firm of H. N. Tower and Company in Petersham. At the time of his mother's death in 1882, he withdrew from active business. For a short period he was engaged in business in Pasadena, California, with Charles H. Trowbridge of Oakham. In 1891 he removed to Worcester and became a member of the firm of Putnam and Fobes, grocers, at 600 Main Street. Two years later he returned to Petersham, preferring, as he said, to live "where I know every one and where every one knows me." He bought the old post office building, was postmaster and store-keeper, and had one of the best, if not the best general store in the vicinity. He held the office of postmaster till 1904. He died March 11, 1905, at Kingston, Jamaica, where he had gone in search of health. By his will he divided equally a considerable part of his property between Oakham and Petersham, the native towns of his father and mother. His purpose was to contribute towards the erection of a new school building in Petersham, and a library building in Oakham. Charles A. Fobes inherited excellent business capacity, was honorable and trustworthy, and a true and generous friend. His loyal devotion to the towns where his father and mother were born marks him as an affectionate son, and a man of rare qualities of heart.

William A. Fobes, the sixth son, inherited from his father a great fondness for books and an ambition for study. Though the father had himself been prepared to enter Brown University, he was not a little disappointed when his son, under the stimulating influence of his teacher, Deacon James Allen, expressed a desire to fit himself for college, much preferring to have him remain at home and become a good farmer. Yielding, however, to the persuasive words of this prince among teachers, he ceased to oppose his son's wishes, and in later years was proud of his success as a scholar. William began the study of Latin in Oakham under Deacon Allen in the east center school-

house in the fall term of 1842, and continued his studies at home as time permitted. In the following spring he entered Mr. Nicholl's school in Brookfield, where he remained one year. After polishing up his preparation by ten weeks at the Amherst Academy, he entered Amherst College in the fall of 1844, from which he was graduated as Bachelor of Arts in 1848. Three years later he was graduated from Bangor Theological Seminary, and entered at once on the work of the ministry. During a long and successful career he preached at Deerfield and Hooksett, N. H.; at Kittery and Lebanon, Me.; at North Scituate, R. I.; at Halifax, Chesterfield and Monterey, Mass.; and at Salem, Conn. He retired from active service in 1891, having been in the ministry continuously for more than forty years. He is still in good health and resides at Worcester, Mass.

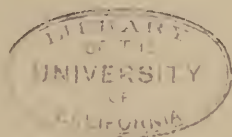
Mr. Fobes never aimed at display in the pulpit, but he was a good preacher. His sermons were clear and practical, and meant to reach the common people. He was especially successful as a pastor. Back of the preacher was the man, thoroughly sincere and honest, who practised himself what he preached to others. His life was so pure and Christlike that he was beloved not only by his own people, but by those outside the church, especially those poor and often neglected, who always found in him a friend.

Hiram Fobes, the youngest of the seven sons, lived the usual life of the country boy, helping on the farm, sharing the simple village amusements, and going to school during the weeks when school was in session. He was a quiet, earnest boy, with a good deal of the sturdy reliability of character that had won for his father the respect of the community. Even his earliest teachers saw that he had ability and watched with interest to see in what direction it would develop. Already he had manifested a clearness of mind and a certain executive ability that seemed to them



HIRAM FOBES
(1885)

to indicate a sure success in the practical affairs of the business world. He had hardly entered his teens when his school days came to an end and he became a clerk for James Hager, who kept a market in the north end of what is now the Park View Inn of Oakham. In a short time Mr. Hager died. Mr. Fobes was then seventeen, and he felt that the time had come for him to leave home and begin to make a place for himself in the world. His thoughts turned toward Worcester. It was not new to him, by any means. Indeed, he had already made at least one business trip to the city. Long years afterwards he used to enjoy telling the story of that journey. "My father had some sheep to sell," he said. "He told me how much he expected to get for them at home and said that if I would drive them to Worcester and dispose of them, I might have all that I could make over that amount. I drove them to town and sold them for twenty-five dollars more than the sum he had named. It was sixteen miles to Worcester, and I walked both ways. My feet were blistered, but I forgot the pain when I looked at my twenty-five dollars. No money that I had afterwards ever looked so big to me." A boy of that stamp had naturally small difficulty in finding occupation. For eight years he was employed in the meat and provision business. When he was twenty-five, he ventured to establish a market of his own. Then came long days of work and economy and careful planning. His untiring industry, his good judgment, and his uprightness of character won for him universal confidence. His affairs prospered beyond his highest anticipations; and while he was yet a young man, he was looked upon as one of the substantial business men of the city. In 1870, after only fifteen years of trade, he was in a position to retire from business, though he continued for several years to deal in live stock and in real estate.



He never sought office of any kind; but men like him cannot be hidden, and he was chosen for many positions of trust and honor. He was a member of the Common Council of the City of Worcester in 1879 and 1880, and an Alderman in 1881 and 1882. He was also Director in the Worcester Safe Deposit Company, in the Worcester Street Railway Company, and in the First National Fire Insurance Company.

Mr. Fobes was a good citizen. He gave liberally to public enterprises in his native town and also in the city which had become his home. He was a true and faithful friend. That any one was in want was enough to win from him the help that was needed, whether in money or advice or sympathy. He has left behind him a record of which his family may well be proud.

He was married in 1870 to Miss Celia Elizabeth Brayton of Smithfield, R. I., and had five children, only two of whom lived to maturity: Harriet Fobes, who became the wife of Mr. Albert L. Gifford; and Hiram Nye Fobes, who was graduated as Bachelor of Arts at Harvard University in 1901.

Hiram Nye Fobes was born in Worcester, and his education was carried on in the public schools of that city without a break until he was prepared to enter Harvard College. His course in the Classical High School, as in the lower schools, was marked by a thoroughness and never-failing determination to do his best in everything that he undertook. In 1895 he was president of the Sumner Club, a High School society for literary work and debating. In 1897 he entered Harvard College, and graduated four years later *cum laude*. Earnest student as he was, he was neither bookworm nor recluse. He belonged to the Pi Eta Society, the Worcester Club of Harvard University, the Freshman Debating Club, and the Boylston Chemical Club. Long before leaving college he had decided that his life should be devoted to the



HIRAM NYE FOBES
(1901)

study and practice of medicine. The summer after his graduation he spent in European travel, returning to Harvard in the autumn for a year of graduate study in the Medical Department. One year later, in 1902, he entered the Medical School of Johns Hopkins University, and in the few weeks that he was in Baltimore he won friends and the respect and liking of his instructors. Neither in school nor in college had he been robust, although he had done everything in his power to increase his strength. Illness came upon him during the summer of 1902, and though he persisted in entering upon his medical studies, even his resoluteness and determination could not make up for the physical vigor that he lacked. He was obliged to return to his home, and after more than two years of illness he died on March 8, 1905.

His years were few. The end came when he was hardly ready even to begin what he looked upon as his life work, and yet those who knew him must feel that he had already accomplished more than he realized. It is no easy thing for a young man to keep himself free from the many temptations around him, to live simply and honorably, to work honestly and heartily for a single aim; and then, when the object of his ambition is almost within his grasp, to see it withdrawn. This experience he had, and he met the failure of his cherished plans with a quiet acceptance of the inevitable, a determination to enjoy all that his health would permit. This brought him content, even in his disappointment, and roused in the hearts of those who knew him a respect and admiration mingled with the tender affection with which his memory will always be regarded.

Mrs. Celia E. Fobes and her daughter, Mrs. Harriet Fobes Gifford, have generously contributed three thousand dollars each to the fund for the erection of this building, in loving memory of Mr. Hiram Fobes, the husband and father, and of Mr. Hiram Nye Fobes, the son and brother.

It should not be forgotten that the children of Peres Fobes were descended from other worthy ancestors on the mother's side. Joseph's mother was Alice Stone, granddaughter of Captain Isaac Stone, probably the ablest citizen of Oakham in the eighteenth century. He was a leading man in all town affairs and often represented the town in the legislature. The mother of the other six sons was Melissa Nye, whose mother was Parnel Allen, daughter of the first Deacon Jesse Allen, who came to Oakham from Bridgewater in 1770. Who does not know what the influence and example of the Allen family have done for the town!

The sons of Peres Fobes were all successful men. They prospered because they stood for truth, justice and fair dealing. It has been truthfully said that no man could name a single dishonorable action of any one of them. Such men are the bulwark of the state, and their memory is a blessed inheritance.

The building whose corner-stone is to be laid to-day will serve a double purpose. It will guard for centuries a collection of the best books, steadily increasing in number, which we hope the people of the town will always be interested to read. It will stand also as a family memorial and will preserve the name which it bears when all other Oakham family names, now so familiar to us, will be unknown to the people of the town, except as, now and then, one may be deciphered by curious eyes on some old marble slab in a half-forgotten cemetery. It is surprising how soon the prominent people of a town pass out of the popular mind. Who now living in Oakham knows anything about the Craiges, the Harpers, the Hendersons, the McFarlands, the Bells, who were among the chief people of the place one hundred and fifty years ago? How many of those now present ever heard before of Richard Kelley, David Goodale, Joseph

Chaddock, Abijah Cutler, Josiah Burbank, Calvin Edson, Skelton Felton, Elijah Freeman, Jonas Munroe, Peter Fitts, Isaac French, Joel Jones, all of whom were leaders in this place one hundred years ago, and were as well known as are the most prominent men of the town to-day? And what of the future? One hundred years hence, probably, and almost beyond a doubt two hundred years from now, no Oakham family name of the present generation will have a single representative in this town. But this memorial building will cause the name of Fobes to be held in grateful remembrance as long as intelligent men and women live here. There is no family memorial that better serves its purpose than a building erected for the public good.

THE DEDICATION

The building was completed before the close of the year 1907. The lot was graded during the fall of 1907 and the spring of 1908, and Thursday, August 27, 1908, was selected by the Committee for the day of dedication. The following invitation was sent out to former residents of Oakham whose addresses were known, to librarians and town clerks in the nearby towns, and to many other friends.

The
Fobes Memorial Library

Oakham, Massachusetts

will be dedicated on

Thursday August the twenty-seventh

Nineteen hundred and eight

Address by Rev. F. N. Peloubet of Auburndale, Mass.

Exercises will begin at eleven o'clock a. m.

Dinner at one o'clock

Ball Game at the Athletic Field at three o'clock

Drama in Memorial Hall at eight o'clock

You are cordially invited to be present

HARRY B. PARKER

GARDNER M. DEAN

JOHN P. DAY

GEORGE W. STONE

CHARLES M. PACKARD

Library Building Committee

BOARD OF SELECTMEN.

Mr. GARDNER M. DEAN, *Chairman*.

Mr. JOHN P. DAY.

Mr. WILLIAM C. BLISS.

LIBRARY TRUSTEES.

Deacon JESSE ALLEN, *Chairman*.

Miss SARA E. BUTLER.

Mrs. SIBLEY F. WOODIS.

LIBRARIAN.

Mr. FRANK E. DAVIS.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE.

Deacon JESSE ALLEN, *Chairman*.

Mr. J. NELSON BALL.

Mrs. SIBLEY F. WOODIS.

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS.

Mr. CHARLES L. RANDALL.

EXERCISES OF DEDICATION

THURSDAY, AUGUST THE TWENTY-SEVENTH
NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHT

Presiding Officer,

Professor HENRY B. WRIGHT, New Haven, Conn.

Organ Prelude.....Mr. Louis E. Mason, Worcester, Mass.

Invocation.

Anthem—"O Father Almighty"

PrayerRev. Willard E. Streeter, Oakham.

Cornet Duet { Mr. Henry W. Stone, Oakham,
 { Mr. Frank W. Chaffin, Worcester.

"Oakham Libraries"....Dean Henry P. Wright, New Haven, Conn.

Keller's American Hymn.

"Library Opportunity To-day,"

Mr. Robert K. Shaw of the Worcester Public Library.

Cornet SoloMr. Frank W. Chaffin.

"The Library and the Children,"

Dr. Eva M. Tappan, Worcester, Mass.

Cornet SoloMr. Henry W. Stone.

Presentation.....Mrs. Celia E. Fobes, Worcester, Mass.

Acceptance:

on behalf of the TownMr. Gardner M. Dean.

on behalf of the Library TrusteesDeacon Jesse Allen.

Song—"The Dearest Spot is Home."

"The Village Library,"

Rev. Francis N. Peloubet, Auburndale, Mass.

Singing—"America"by the Audience

Benediction.

LIBRARY BUILDING COMMITTEE.

Mr. HARRY B. PARKER, *Chairman*.
Mr. GARDNER M. DEAN, *Treasurer*.
Mr. JOHN P. DAY. Mr. GEORGE W. STONE.
Mr. CHARLES M. PACKARD.

RECEPTION COMMITTEE.

Rev. WILLARD E. STREETER, *Chairman*.
Mr. J. NELSON BALL. Mr. JOSEPH E. GILBOY.
Mr. WILLIAM C. BLISS. Miss FLORINE E. LINCOLN.
Miss MILDRED BLISS. Mrs. MARIA T. RUGG.
Miss SARA E. BUTLER. Miss ALTHEA E. RUSSELL.
Miss RUTH BUTTERFIELD. Mrs. EDGAR SWINDELL.
Mr. HENRY C. FOBES. Mr. CHARLES H. TROWBRIDGE.

COMMITTEE ON MUSIC.

Deacon JESSE ALLEN, *Chairman*.
Mr. FRANK E. DAVIS. Mrs. SIBLEY F. WOODIS.

CHOIR.

<i>Soprano.</i>	<i>Tenor.</i>
Mrs. SIBLEY F. WOODIS.	Deacon JESSE ALLEN.
Miss ALICE B. ALLEN.	<i>Bass.</i>
Miss ANNIE CHRISTIANSON.	Mr. H. S. HARWOOD.
<i>Alto.</i>	Mr. W. S. CRAWFORD.
Miss EVA S. ALLEN.	Mr. HARLAN ANGIER.
Miss BERNICE ANGIER.	<i>Assistant.</i>
	Mr. JUSTIN E. RAWSON.

COMMITTEE ON PRINTING.

Mr. HARRY B. PARKER. Mr. FRANK E. DAVIS.

USHERS.

Miss MILDRED L. BURT. Miss LUCY E. WILBUR.
Miss MABEL E. CONANT. Miss ALICE L. WRIGHT.

FOBES
MEMORIAL LIBRARY
PRESENTED TO THE
TOWN OF OAKHAM
BY
CELIA E. FOBES
AND
HARRIET FOBES GIFFORD
IN MEMORY OF
HIRAM FOBES
AND
HIRAM NYE FOBES
AND BY
CHARLES A. FOBES
IN MEMORY OF HIS FATHER
P. AMES FOBES
1907

ADDRESSES ON DEDICATION DAY

August 27, 1908,
in the Congregational Church

THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

Friends of Oakham—We have gathered in this place and at this hour with a two-fold object. We have come together both for commemoration and in appreciation. Three persons, attached by closest ties to this town, have given generously of their time, their thought, and their means to erect here a beautiful library building as a memorial to three other members of a family whose name ever has been and ever will be honored among us. It is now the wish of the donors that we accept this gift,—an enduring monument to true and honored men and women, and, at the same time, the token of their interest in us, of their affection for us.

In a sense, the first part of our duty is already well-nigh completed. A full sketch of the Oakham branch of the Fobes family, dwelling especially on the life and attainments of those three whose names are to be commemorated, was given at the laying of the corner-stone of the Library on August 7, 1907. This, with the beautiful bronze tablet at the entrance to the building and the excellent family portraits on the walls of the reading room, leaves little that we, at this hour, can still do by way of commemoration.

But upon us who have assembled here there does devolve the sacred duty and the joyful privilege of appreciation. These we can fulfill, I am sure, in no way more satisfactory to our generous benefactors than by showing them that we are alive to the fullest possibilities of usefulness in their gift.

What other men have done and are doing with such a gift, and therefore what we of the Oakham of to-day can and must do—that is the theme of this hour.

The first speaker of the morning, who has been a resident of this town during the whole or a part of nearly every one of the last sixty years, needs no introduction to an Oakham audience. Dean Henry P. Wright of Yale University will address us on the subject of

OAKHAM LIBRARIES

DEAN WRIGHT:

The first settlers of Oakham were Scotch Presbyterians from the north of Ireland. They were men of physical and mental vigor, but their educational advantages had been few, and in the new settlement they found little time for reading except in the Bible, and very likely not much in that. That they were not over-anxious about the education of their children, as long as they went regularly to meeting on the Lord's Day, is evident from the short but decisive vote passed in precinct meeting on May 26, 1760, "to Reas no monney for scooling." Three years later, after the frame of the meeting-house had been raised, ten pounds was voted for schooling. It is doubtful whether this sum was ever expended for schools. Ten pounds was also voted for "scooling" May 14, 1765, but on October 1 of that year the precinct "voted that the money Reased for Scooling shold be apropebated to pay for preaching." No other money was voted for schools till 1768. There were many children in town, but they were widely scattered, the first settlements being in all parts of the town except the center. The first schoolhouse was built in 1769 on the town common, about two rods east of where the Fobes Memorial Library now stands. The first school in this house was kept in the winter of 1769-70, but the house was not entirely finished even in 1792.¹

¹ See pp. 21 and 24.

Many of the families that moved in during the next twenty years, especially those from Bridgewater and other towns in the eastern part of the state, had already known the value of schools, and when Joseph Fobes, the grandfather of Ames and Hiram, came to Oakham in 1792 there were eight school districts in town, and the schools were good for that period. It is interesting to note that twenty years after the erection of the first schoolhouse the people of Oakham showed their appreciation of books by establishing a social library, containing in 1793 about sixty volumes, and afterwards increased to from eighty to one hundred. The regulations of this library are not preserved, but they were without doubt essentially the same as those of other social libraries of the times.² We may therefore assume that each subscriber paid at the outset two dollars toward the purchase of books.³ We know from documents still existing: first, that each subscriber was liable to be assessed twenty-five cents in any year when the majority of the Proprietors should so vote; second, that the library was open for taking out and returning books six times in a year, viz.: "on the first Wednesday of the following months: March at one o'clock, May at four, July at five, September at three, November and January at two";⁴ and third, that

² Social libraries were common in Massachusetts towns at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Twelve towns in Worcester County had such libraries in 1793: Ashburnham, Douglas, Harvard, Lancaster, Leicester, Northboro, Oakham, Oxford, Princeton, Rutland, Winchendon, Worcester. Whitney's *History of Worcester County*, passim.

³ Such libraries were recognized by an act of the Massachusetts legislature in 1798, which gave the Proprietors power to raise money by assessment for increasing the libraries, and to impose and collect fines. See p. 105.

⁴ Note on fly-leaf of Morse's *Universal Geography*, in the Oakham social library.

in 1803 the number of subscribers was sixty-five.⁵ No list of the books in this library is known to exist. For many New England people at that period the popular books were on religion, and several of the volumes in the Oakham social library were without doubt on religious topics. I remember to have heard from my grandmother⁶ that Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" was an Oakham library book much in demand in the early years of the nineteenth century. But all the books were not devotional or theological. Two volumes belonging to this library are still preserved. One is the first volume of the third edition of the "American Universal Geography," by Jedediah Morse. It was published in 1796, was added to the library January 7, 1800, and was numbered seventy-six. It is a volume of eight hundred and eight pages and contains eighteen maps. Not much was then known of North America, especially the western portion. In this edition, the Bay of San Francisco and the Sacramento River do not appear, but on one of Morse's later maps, used by my mother, the Sacramento is given as the supposed outlet of the Great Salt Lake and the "probable communication between the Atlantic and Pacific." In the account of Worcester we find this information: "The public buildings of this town are two Congregational churches, a court house,⁷ and a 'strong stone Gaol.'⁸"

⁵ See p. 105.

⁶ Mrs. Hannah S. Woolley, daughter of Captain John Crawford, soldier in the Revolutionary Army.

⁷ The court house referred to was the old one of wood, which according to the editor of the *Spy* was so small and uncomfortable that persons obliged to attend court in the hot days of July and August almost died of suffocation.

⁸ The escapes from the old wooden jail were very frequent. When this new jail was completed, the editor of the *Spy* in his account of it (September 4, 1788) said: "Without some convulsion of nature, it is not probable that it will need any repairs, excepting the roof, for two or three centuries."

The other volume is entitled "The Impartial History of the Late Revolution in France," was published in Boston by Manning and Loring in 1794, was added to the library November 4, 1794, and was numbered sixty-one. This is the oldest library book in town, having been catalogued one hundred and fourteen years ago. It bears evidence of having been much read and carefully handled, and we can easily believe that, as in other social libraries, the rules for the care of the books were exceedingly rigorous, and that fines were imposed, not only for keeping a book out beyond the limit,⁹ but also for turning down a leaf and for defacing a book by getting any candle grease or ink spots upon it.¹⁰ This library was in existence till about 1835. The final disposition of the books is uncertain, but they were probably divided up among the remaining subscribers. If any other volumes belonging to the Oakham social library are in existence, it is hoped that they will be placed in the Fobes Memorial Library building, where they may be preserved as links connecting the distant past with the present.

The social library was followed by the school libraries. Three school districts in town, the West, the West Center, and the East Hill, took advantage of the offer of the state in 1842, by which the State Treasurer was authorized to pay to the selectmen of the town fifteen dollars, to be expended for books for a library in any district that had raised fifteen dollars for the same purpose. A school library numbered from thirty to forty volumes and was kept at some central

⁹ In Oakham two months, in Leicester six weeks, and in Amherst two months.

¹⁰ "Every one who shall deform any book by folding down a Leaf shall pay one Shilling, or who shall drop or leave thereon any Grease or Ink shall pay for each Drop or Spot Six Pence, or who shall tear out a Leaf shall pay two Shillings, or who shall any other Way or Means deface or abuse any Book shall pay such other Sum as the Damage may be in the Judgment of the Librarian or the Committee." Rules of the Amherst Social Library.

house in the district, in a small red bookcase. The books were issued under the sanction of the State Board of Education. They were rather small duodecimo volumes, uniform in binding. These books were on the whole well selected; some of them were dry reading for school children, but they served a useful purpose when few families were supplied with books or magazines at home. They were quite generally read by teachers and pupils and gave many young people a taste for reading and an ambition to make the most of their opportunities. A few of these books are still preserved in the present town library. There are probably enough more in town to make up one fairly complete school library. These also should be gathered and deposited in the new library building, and kept in the little red bookcase, that men may be able to compare the advantages of sixty years ago with those of to-day.

The beginning of the present town library was made by the Oakham Library Association, which was organized in 1848. The leaders in this movement, as in most others of that day for the improvement of the village, were John Parker, James Packard and Samuel G. Henry. Mr. Henry was then a harness-maker and carriage-trimmer. He lived in the house which he had built in 1835, on the corner where this library now stands, and had a shop connected with his residence on the west side. Mr. Parker, the village tailor, lived where Mr. Conant now lives and had his tailor's shop in the basement of his house at the east end. Mr. Parker was the first President of the Association and had a kind of fatherly interest in the library as long as he remained in town. Mr. Packard was living in the house which he had just completed (now occupied by Mr. Tottingham). He was the first Librarian, and the library was kept at his house till 1852, when it was transferred to Mr. Parker's shop. The care displayed by the library committee in the

selection of the first books is evidence of the serious purpose of the men who founded the Association.¹¹ About fifty volumes were purchased in 1848, of which twenty-one were catalogued under History, four under Biography, four under Books of Travel, five under Science, three under Essays, two under Antiquities, and four under Literature. Nearly all of these were standard works, which still have a permanent value. This was a period when men thought, and read books that would make them think, and on subjects about which a thinking man ought to have information.

One result of the establishment of the Oakham Library Association was the formation three years later of the Oakham Lyceum, whose members were given access to the books of the library. The Lyceum was organized December 6, 1851, and continued some years. Its purpose was mental improvement and the diffusion of useful knowledge, to effect which meetings were to be held for discussion and for public lectures. The presidents for the season of 1851-52 were Alexander Crawford and James Allen, the secretaries William Lincoln and Henry K. W. Bent.¹²

¹¹ Mr. Henry, Mr. Packard and Mr. Parker were a kind of village improvement society. They planted the first shade trees in the village. The original row of maples south of the church was set out by them, sixty years ago. Two of these trees, near the southwest corner of the common, are still standing. At the same time they built, in front of their own residences, the first sidewalk in town, and planted there also a row of maples.

¹² Alexander Crawford was Justice of the Peace fourteen years. He twice represented the town in the State Legislature and was Chairman of the Selectmen during the Civil War.

James Allen was deacon in the Congregational Church for more than fifty years, Justice of the Peace for forty years, and Town Clerk for more than a quarter of a century. He served as member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives during four terms, and as member of the State Senate during three terms, and was County Commissioner three years.

Among the other leading members were Samuel G. Henry, John Parker, Rev. James Kimball, Dr. S. P. Martin, Orlando Russell and John W. Clapp.¹³ The first question for discussion was, "Resolved: that the Fugitive Slave Law was necessary and expedient." William Lincoln and Mark Haskell were appointed to speak on the affirmative, and J. W. Clapp and Orlando Russell on the negative. Among the lectures given were the following: Rev. James Kimball, on "The First French Revolution"; Rev. Christopher Cushing of North Brookfield, on "Caste"; Francis Wayland, Jr., afterwards Lieutenant Governor of Connecticut and Dean of the Yale Law School, on "Peter the Great"; Rev. Leonard S. Parker, afterwards Associate Pastor of the first Church of Cambridge, on "Thought and Thinking";

William Lincoln, then twenty-five years of age, was a manufacturer and inventor. He developed the wire-work industry in Oakham, which gave employment to a large number of men and women. No man out of the pulpit ever did more for the moral and religious character of the town.

H. K. W. Bent was a teacher. He went west and located in Los Angeles, and was prominent in educational matters in southern California. He became President of the Board of Trustees of Pomona College, and was for a time Acting President of the College.

¹³ Orlando Russell, a prominent citizen of the town, was a fluent and impressive speaker. He became a minister of the gospel and preached in Methodist and Congregational churches several years.

John W. Clapp, a brilliant scholar, was at this time a student in Amherst College.

Mark Haskell was a man gifted in conversation and an interesting public speaker. He was Town Clerk during the years of the Civil War.

Rev. James Kimball, graduate of Middlebury College and Andover Theological Seminary, was the much-beloved pastor of the Congregational Church from 1832 to 1860.

Dr. Saxton P. Martin was a successful physician. After practising several years in Oakham, he removed to New Braintree, and later to Worcester, where he remained till his death.

Dr. George Brown of Barre, on "The Atmosphere"; and William A. Fobes, then a Senior in the Bangor Theological Seminary, on "The True End of Science."

The influence of the Oakham Library and Lyceum was very great. Many young people of the town read the books of the library and attended the meetings of the Lyceum. A Junior Society for debates and essays was founded soon after, which in 1858 was enlarged into the Franklin Literary Society, which had more than a hundred members. The Civil War called away a large part of the active young men of the town, many of whom went forth never to return. Beyond question, the unusual interest in debating and study among the young people of Oakham from 1856 to the breaking out of the Civil War was in some considerable part the result of the founding of the Oakham Library Association in 1848.¹⁴

The Oakham Free Public Library was established by a vote of the town March 7, 1892, by which the town accepted the library legislation of 1890, in accordance with which books to the value of one hundred dollars were received from the state. By vote of the members of the Oakham Library Association passed June 16, 1902, all the books belonging to the Association, then numbering about two hundred and fifty, "were given and transferred to the Free Public Library of Oakham." Hon. John I. Baker, Hon. William U. Sohier, Miss E. P. Sohier (member of the State Library Committee) and several other citizens of Beverly, Massachusetts, friends of Deacon Jesse Allen, our

¹⁴Twenty-five or more young men and women of Oakham of the period immediately preceding and following the Civil War continued their studies in higher institutions of learning. Of these, seventeen were graduated from the following colleges or collegiate schools: Amherst, three; Yale, three; Oberlin, two; Williams, one; Amherst Agricultural, one; Hartford Theological Seminary, one; Oread Collegiate Institute, four; Mount Holyoke, one; Wellesley, one.

representative in the legislature in 1886 and 1890, added three hundred volumes. Deacon Allen added fifty more. The state has from time to time made further generous contributions. Fifty-six volumes have been presented to the library by our former pastor, Rev. Francis N. Peloubet of Auburndale. About fifty volumes each have been given by Mr. Daniel H. Dean of Cambridge and Mrs. Ellen Henry Warner of Fall River, seventy volumes by Miss Maria S. Daniels of Newton Center, and forty volumes by Mrs. Celia E. Fobes of Worcester. A few other friends of the town have also made gifts to the library, which, increased by purchases authorized by the town, now contains more than eighteen hundred volumes.

It is a matter for congratulation that the Oakham library already contains so many excellent books. The committees that have selected them have shown commendable judgment. Now, with ample space for books and an attractive reading room, the library must grow, and it is of the utmost importance that the books should be selected in accordance with a definite plan, so as to meet the wants of the people.

The greater part of our citizens are and always will be engaged in some form of agriculture. These ought to find in the library the best books on market gardening, fruit growing, stock raising, forestry, and other kindred subjects. The average farmer, by keeping well-posted on the results of recent experiments and by wise and judicious management, can get far greater returns from his labors than he is getting now, and he wants, and ought to have, books that will help him. The housewife should find here books on domestic science and household economy, on the care of the family in sickness and in health, on the most economical and most wholesome foods. Human life can be lengthened by judicious care. One section of the library should be reserved for the teachers and pupils of the public schools. For the teachers there is needed a moderate supply of books

written by practical educators on the best methods of instruction and discipline. It is true that a teacher, like a poet, is born and not made, and no amount of special training will make a good teacher out of poor material; but no teacher is so good that she cannot become better by a study of the methods of other teachers, not to become an imitator, but to discover where her own methods can be improved. For the pupils there should be not only books of reference to supplement the text-books, but also books designed to create an interest in subjects that are especially practical and useful, e. g., books about birds and insects, books that tell how to destroy the insects that spread disease and lay waste the field, the garden, the orchard, and the forest, and books that teach the importance of protecting birds and animals and the useful insects, the farmers' best friends because they destroy the devastating armies of insect pests. I do not know of anything that would help more to increase the value of New England farms than the spreading of just this kind of knowledge among all classes of people.

Of course the books of the library will cover the fields of history and biography; travel and adventure; American antiquities; popular science, including electricity and other branches of physics, chemistry, astronomy, botany, mineralogy and geology; English literature, including the standard essays, the best poetry, the best, and only the best, fiction. In the library of 1848 books of fiction were rare.

A town library should certainly contain everything that can be got together that relates to the history of the town, including all that has been published by persons in town or who have gone out from it, and, as far as they can be obtained, any papers of value that have not been printed. Here ought to be deposited old records of town institutions that have ceased to exist, like debating societies, social clubs, athletic organizations, temperance societies, and the like;

collections of letters; old deeds; school registers, and even old school books. Some one, taking up the subject where Deacon Allen left it in "Vital Records of Oakham," ought to carry on the study of the genealogy of the Oakham families from 1850 to the present day, following up, as far as is possible, those who have removed to other towns and other states. A scrap book, also, containing newspaper clippings about the town and its people, with explanatory marginal notes where necessary, would be of great interest and would soon come to be one of the most valuable acquisitions, and if properly kept, the most valuable acquisition of the library.

The best possible purpose of the library would be to make the people of the town think: think about their business, and study how to improve it; think about their homes, and how to increase the attractiveness and enjoyment of domestic life; think about themselves, and how they can best develop in body, mind and character; think about the wonderful discoveries of this busy age, get interested in popular science, follow up new discoveries and the new applications of the powers of Nature to the wants of man; think about the past, and read the best books in history, philosophy and literature. If we should systematically give to the study of the best books of the library one-tenth of the time that we now give to recreation and should form clubs for information and mutual improvement as our fathers did, how much we should add to our knowledge of the things about which all intelligent persons born and brought up in New England want to know!

This beautiful building was not meant by the donors to be merely an ornament to the village. It is here for use and should be used freely. Every person in town old enough to use it wisely ought to be welcome and to feel at home when he enters it. It is for us to show our appreciation of this gift by making a wise use of its privileges.



CHARLES AMES FOBES
(1898)



THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

"Those men are not necessarily the most useful in their generation who on the surface seem to be the principals in the great changes recorded in human history." Among the silent benefactors and servants of the race none are doing more for human progress, in making truth accessible to all men, than the librarians of our great libraries. It is a great pleasure to introduce to you as the next speaker on the programme one of these men, Mr. Robert K. Shaw of the Worcester Public Library, whose subject is

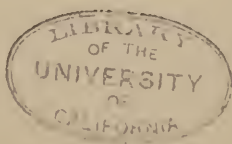
LIBRARY OPPORTUNITY TO-DAY

MR. SHAW:

Mr. Chairman, citizens and guests—I count it a rare privilege to be invited to this charming country town, and to bring to you the greetings of the Free Public Library of Worcester.

I desire especially to congratulate the generous donors of the Fobes Memorial Library on the form which they have given to their benefaction. In place of the granite shaft or the marble statue, they have had the wisdom to rear a memorial which thrills with the living pulse of literature, and enshrines a heart that beats warm with the inspired thought of the ages.

The subject, "Library opportunity to-day," I have chosen because I believe in it with all my heart. Not that opportunity was wholly lacking *yesterday*, for the true library missionary and disseminator of good literature has been known to every age. The best librarian of *yesterday*, however, was an encyclopedia, while he of *to-day* is an index. A typical example of the librarian of the old school was the late Dr. Spofford, for many years Librarian of Congress. I recall distinctly going to him once for informa-



tion on a minor point of constitutional history and receiving the immediate and unhesitating reply, "You will find that discussed among the notes of Ford's 'Essays on the Constitution,' " and so, sure enough, I did.

With the old school type of librarian, active and at his desk every day, the public receives quick and intelligent service. But if he sickens or dies, then comes the evil day for his dependents. In Pennsylvania some months ago the whole legal machinery of a county, including courts, lawyers, jurymen, and witnesses, was put out of commission for days because a certain law librarian, who knew all about the library, and carried everything in his head, committed suicide.

Wider library opportunities are coming to communities to-day because we are beginning to learn the value of training for librarianship. Trustees are recognizing at last that a trained man is as much needed to run a modern library as to manage a hospital, or to try cases in court. The idea that a broken down minister, lawyer, or doctor, or that a bookish young woman of no special qualification, will do well enough for a librarian, is fast becoming obsolete.

The idea of practical training for librarianship is, I fancy, a new one for most of my audience. Library education, in fact, has scarcely come of age, as it was twenty-one years ago, at Columbia University, that Melvil Dewey founded the first library school. Perhaps, my friends, you will pardon the digression while I remark that the true pioneer of modern librarianship, he who, more than thirty years ago, dreamed the dreams and, with the prophet's keen eye, saw the vision of future possibilities for the public library, was Melvil Dewey. An unalterable faith was his chief characteristic. When he urged the idea of *annual* meetings of librarians, the proposal was ridiculed as chimerical. "Very well," exclaimed Mr. Dewey, "half a dozen of us will get together to talk plans every year and draw new inspiration; any

others who want to may come, and the rest are welcome to stay away," with the result that the annual meeting has never failed, since 1885, to take place, and the handful of earnest conventionists of that early time has increased to one thousand and eighteen as the largest number yet recorded.

His faith in a library magazine has likewise been wholly justified, and we have had continuous issues of the *Library Journal* since the famous pioneer year of 1876.

To attempt here to exhibit the curriculum of a modern library school would be quite out of place. A library school is a technical institution and not an establishment for the distillation or absorption of culture. If at the end of a college course you have no love for the best in literature, the chances are many to one that a library school course will not provide it. The Albany school, moved from Columbia in 1889, stands now entirely on a post-graduate basis, and should be ranked in the same category as schools of law, medicine, or technology. It takes young men and women of good general education and, in a two years' course of mostly technical study, fits them for the practical work of librarianship.

Library education, however, is not altogether post-graduate. At the Pratt Institute, in Brooklyn, at the Drexel in Philadelphia and at the state libraries of Illinois and Wisconsin, among others, excellent courses may be pursued. Simmons college, too, in near-by Boston, offers an admirable opportunity, though to women only, to combine cultural with technical study.

Again, library opportunity broadens to-day because we have a splendid national library, with a progressive librarian at its head. Magnificent it is in everything but its name. *Library of Congress* is a bad misnomer, for business runs on as briskly there whether Congress is in session or not, and the profane have been known to remark that many Congressmen use the library chiefly to satisfy the

novel-devouring proclivities of their wives, sisters, cousins and aunts. Will not all my hearers watch their opportunity to help transform the *Library of Congress* into the *United States National Library*?

Being supported by the nation, it must receive attention from the nation's lawmakers. So it does, and it exerts an active coöperative influence from Maine to California. Take a single instance of the printed catalogue cards. For practically all your new books bought to-day by the Fobes Memorial Library, or to be bought hereafter, you can purchase, for less than two cents each, carefully and tastefully printed catalogue cards. You will thus secure uniformity of appearance, save yourselves much work, and receive material, to the preparation of which the best experts in the country are devoting all their time. "

Again, if the Library of Congress had rendered no other service to the libraries of the country than to put through the press the "A. L. A. Catalogue" of eight thousand best books for a small library, an invaluable guide in the selection and evaluation of literature, our country's debt to its national library would still be a heavy one.

Library activities to-day are so various that it would be preposterous for me, in the time at my disposal, to attempt even to outline them. With your indulgence I will refer to a few in which the Fobes Memorial Library can profitably share. In the great work of helping children to know and appreciate the best in literature, the Librarian's opportunity is plain. He may visit the schools and talk to the children about the books which they should read in connection with their studies in history, geography, and literature; he may confer with the teachers on supplementary reading, and introduce them to the ways and means of inspiring love for good reading among the pupils; he may help them in telling stories and giving readings from the great books of the English-speaking race, and from our glorious imaginative

literature of fables and fairy-tales; he may, perhaps, provide pictures to stimulate interest in the study of our own country and foreign lands. The stereoscopic views published by the Underwood company of New York are a continuous delight to young and old alike, and, if studied systematically with the printed aids provided, possess a high educational value. As this general topic is to be treated by Dr. Tappan, who can handle it far more competently than I, let these few hints suffice.

Oakham farmers, too, should receive aid and benefit from their library. Here again the national government turns its powerful mind to the farmer's need. Whether he be market-gardener, milk-producer, poultry-fancier, or bee-keeper, the abundant and diversified literature in the Farmers' bulletins should be a real help. No earnest man can fail to be benefited by reading regularly the literature of his profession. For the farmer this may be harder than for the doctor, lawyer, or librarian, but if so, the gain is surer, as the number of mere plodding husbandmen who will not read is likely to remain large. Let this library, then, remember its duty to the farmer by providing modern books on agriculture; by helping to distribute the government literature; by subscribing to agricultural magazines, and by stirring up the interest in grange or institute work. Let the farmer, on his side, seek diligently for these aids from the library.

The travelling library has come into great prominence of late. This term is applied to small collections of say ten to fifty carefully selected books, packed in permanent cases (which serve as bookshelves on reaching their destination) and shipped from place to place as needed. I venture to suggest that, unless the experiment has been already tried, such a collection be formed, made up from the best of recreative reading, with specimens of biography, travel, history, poetry and agriculture, and be deposited at a point distant

from the library, where several families may have access to it. The cheer and comfort which may be brought to remote districts by the right books being introduced to the right people (particularly if the right man comes to introduce them) may be attested by many a hamlet in Wisconsin, New York or elsewhere, in which this admirable feature of library extension work has been introduced. In a widely scattered town like Oakham there is a fine opportunity to make this succeed. What Oakham has done with books in the past has been most admirably set forth in the scholarly paper of Dean Wright; let the historian of the twentieth century chronicle the fact that her later work followed worthily the pioneer efforts of her early settlers.

From these considerations it will be clearly seen that *service* is the watchword of the library movement to-day. That service, to be most effective, must be cheerful, ready, and intelligent.

"They also serve who only stand and wait," wrote John Milton over two centuries ago; but it is not so in the public library of to-day. It is rather the Master's command, "Go ye forth into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature," which we librarians must heed. To obey this injunction literally for Oakham does not lie outside the pale of possibility. If everybody within the sound of my voice were to study the library carefully to-day, with a view to making it useful to himself, and would then make an effort to inform his acquaintances and get them to visit it, I venture to predict that before a year, each one of the five hundred and nineteen inhabitants of this town would have a personal interest in the Fobes Memorial Library.

The highest and most intelligent service is the prerogative of the best education. That all men are born equal is a glorious sociological theory, but few believe in it practically to-day. It is the privilege of those who have learned to

hold the torch of knowledge, to raise it high before their fellow men, and let its beams shine afar.

The idea of service, I believe, is not new in this town of Oakham. From the official records of the Civil war I read that in a population of less than one thousand, Oakham furnished one hundred and two men for that stupendous conflict. If that spirit of patriotism could to-day be transmuted into one of sympathetic service in mutual aid for deriving the best from life, even this new and commodious building would soon be outgrown.

By library opportunity, then, I mean, broadly speaking, opportunity to serve our fellow men. It is for us all, who love books and wish to spread their influence, to work together for the circulation of the best in literature. It is here that we librarians appeal to you, clergymen, authors, teachers, and book-lovers, one and all, to reach out the right hand of literary fellowship, particularly to the young and to those whose opportunities have been bounded by narrower limits than your own. To you it has been granted to pass those magic portals which unfold into that marvelous world of imaginative literature. Be not selfish revellers on those verdant meadows, but, with the Fobes Memorial Library as your perennial source of supply, take some benighted brother thither, and teach him, too, the mystery of the printed page.

[Mr. Shaw began his library career in 1897, at which time he entered the New York State Library School at Albany. Graduating two years later, he served for two years on the staff of the State Library in Albany, and in 1901 was appointed to the Catalogue Division of the Library of Congress. After a three years' service in the national library, he was elected librarian at Brockton, Mass., and six months later became assistant librarian of the Worcester Public library. In January, 1909, he was promoted to the headship of that library.—H. P. W.]

THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

The next speaker of the day, who knew for many years Hiram Nye Fobes, is in the fullest sympathy with this occasion. Herself a writer and teacher of rare powers, no one is better qualified to speak both for the library and for the children. We all rejoice to welcome to Oakham Dr. Eva March Tappan of Worcester, who will address us on

THE LIBRARY AND THE CHILDREN

DR. TAPPAN:

All children like to read, either through their own eyes or through those of others. Grown folk may enjoy reading, but most of them have lost the power to forget themselves in it as a child can do. They read a book, they like it, they talk about it, they criticise it; but children live in it. To a child a new book is a new world. Its scenes are laid in real places, its characters are real people and their words have weight and value. It becomes a power in the life of the little reader. Our greatest men have never wearied of looking back to the books that they read as children, of saying, "Those were what helped me on to success." Daniel Webster said, "My opportunities in youth for acquiring an education were limited, but I had the great good fortune of being well supplied with useful books, and these gave me my start in life." Henry Clay said, "A wise mother and good books enabled me to succeed."

The business of the child is, first, to learn. Our country provides free schools because we believe that to educate a child is to start him on the way to becoming a good citizen. The schoolroom of to-day is struggling to take all knowledge for its province. Wild and frantic efforts are made to crowd into what is known as "the course" all branches of learning, art, handicraft, and amusement; but it remains



MRS. HARRIET FORBES GIFFORD



to be proved whether the average school can teach thoroughly much more than good habits of study and observation and a few facts. Here the library and the school work hand in hand. Every teacher knows that if one child merely learns the lesson assigned and another reads something about it outside of school and brings to his classroom a bit of fresh information, the second is the one who gets most from the lesson. In other words, whenever the school provides a fact, the library provides the general reading that fixes the fact, that broadens and extends the child's knowledge and makes it a part of his life and thought.

But the business of the child is to increase in wisdom as well as in knowledge. In his own little circle of life, he learns much from seeing what others do. He sees how his father raises a field of corn, or manages a law case, or governs a state. But it may be that he does not wish to become either farmer or lawyer and he sees no immediate prospect of being chosen as governor. He may, then, leave school with the uncomfortable feeling that he must go to work at something, no matter what, if it will only pay him well and give him little to do. The wisdom of the Philistine has declared that "Those who never do any more than they get paid for never get paid for any more than they do," and I do not know of anything that will so undermine all possibility of success in life as the determination to search for an easy job.

If a boy's wisdom has become broadened by a knowledge of what other people have done and how they have done it, he has some idea of what he must do to become a doctor, a business man, a civil engineer. Here, too, he finds help in the library. If he has read, he has had a chance to learn what kind of work appeals to him; and he forges on toward it with a taste and determination that make long hours short and hard work easy and lead him onward

to that unfailing joy in one's work which is the inner glory of a successful life. Biography and history are always helpful. So, too, are stories of adventure. Of course the dime novel, the sort of book that is passed about slyly from desk to desk, may set a boy to longing for dirks and bowie knives and pistols, for highway robberies and midnight ambuscades; but there are hundreds of stories equally exciting, of adventures undertaken for some honorable purpose, of deeds of daring that came along in the course of a man's duty. It is worth much to a child to see that others as well as himself have difficulties to encounter, to gain revelations of quickness of thought and resource that will flash back into his mind when his own time of peril and need have arrived. A story is not harmful because it is full of thrilling acts, but because the motive of those acts was bad. Keep children from reading trash by giving them something better. Establish the taste for the best before weak, foolish, harmful books can get a hold upon them.

Give the children imaginative reading also, fairy tales, folk lore, myths, poetry. Children are naturally imaginative, and their imagination must have proper food or it will starve and die. It must be turned in right and useful directions or it will wander away in crooked and forbidden paths. There is little that is of such practical value in everyday life as imagination. The merchant rejoices that when he leaves his business, it will fall into the hands of his son; but he likes to believe that the boy will go on and make improvements, will find out new and better ways of carrying on the trade than he himself has known. The man who is to find out new ways must have imagination. Any one can plant a seed and watch the growth of the plant; but the man who has imagination dreams of what his plant might become and sets to work to improve it. It is men of this stamp who make two blades of grass grow where but one grew before. These are the men who father our great

undertakings, who gaze into the future and see the needs of to-morrow as well as those of to-day. The sculptor must see the statue in the marble before he strikes the first blow upon his chisel. The builder of the bridge must see the bridge in his imagination before he can put it into iron and wood and stone. The best commander is the one who sees a vision of victory ever before him and presses on to make the vision a reality.

Third, the child must gain knowledge and he must increase in wisdom, but more than these, he must develop character, and verily, the greatest of these is character. New York's Superintendent of Public Instruction (Charles R. Skinner) says, "Character is largely made up of impressions formed by what is read in childhood." Every mother longs for her children to be brave and truthful, to be tender and loving, to make the most of themselves, to be successful in the world; but she does not always know just how to set about helping her son to become the honored man she dreams of seeing him, her daughter to become the noble woman whom every one loves and respects. Good reading is the greatest help she can have. A child is sometimes selfish and cowardly because it does not occur to him that there is anything better than to look out for his own comfort and safety. Let him read stories of the brave men who gave their lives for others, and he gains a new way of looking at the matter. Let him see that the men and women who have done the noble, unselfish deeds are the ones who are loved and admired, and he can hardly help longing to be like them. Imaginative reading is one of the greatest moral helps. One may be kind because he thinks it proper or politic; but he can never achieve loving kindness, can never sympathize—*feel with*—another unless he is imaginative enough to understand in some degree the tastes and longings, the trials and temptations of that person. Let him who would be good and true and honorable keep

ever before him in his imagination a vision of the sort of person he would like to become, or half his efforts will run wide of the mark.

This, then, is what a library can do for the children. It can not only give them knowledge, but it can help them to make the knowledge that they acquire practical, to make it a part of their lives. It can widen their view of life and teach them wisdom. It can help to develop their characters, to lead them onward to noble manhood and womanhood. Here they may cultivate the delight in reading which will put joy and happiness into their lives. He who loves to read dwells within an enchanted circle. He can always withdraw into a world of his own. There he may mingle with the noblest society, with people of the rarest genius, who will never frown upon his mistakes or scorn him for his ignorance. Other friends may fail us. They may be far away, or busy, or forgetful; but books, if once our friends, are friends forever.

The generous gifts that have made these good things possible for the children of Oakham will ever call to mind three worthy lives, the invalid seeking for health, but in his suffering ever mindful of his beloved village and longing to do for it some kindness that should keep in the minds of the people the father and mother whom he loved; the upright, honorable business man, as kind and generous as he was successful, his thoughts ever turning back tenderly to the home of his childhood; and the young man who was called away when his college days were barely at an end, before whom life, so nobly begun, stretched out in promise of long years of happiness and usefulness—these are the three. May their influence hover over this library. May the thought of what they did and what they longed to do serve as an inspiration to each one who passes through its doors.



MRS. CELIA E. FOBES

THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

It falls to others in the exercises of presentation and acceptance which now follow—to Mr. Gardner M. Dean on behalf of the Board of Selectmen, and to Deacon Jesse Allen on behalf of the Library Trustees—to publicly express to Mrs. Fobes the deep appreciation of the town for the beautiful Fobes Memorial Library. But the presiding officer, on such an occasion as this, has an equally happy privilege, that of cordially welcoming, on behalf of every citizen and of every friend of this town, Mrs. Fobes to our midst.

MRS. FOBES:

Before presenting these keys to the Chairman of the Selectmen, I wish to express in behalf of my daughter and myself our personal gratitude: first, to each and every member of the Building Committee; second, to every person who has in any way contributed to the rearing of this structure. May it be of lasting benefit to those who come after us as well as to those who enjoy its use to-day. May it keep in tender remembrance the names of those who have gone before.

Speaking for them and for all who have given their assistance by word or deed, I here present to the people of Oakham this Memorial Library; and in token thereof I now deliver these keys of the building to Gardner M. Dean, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen.

MR. DEAN:

Mr. Chairman—I do not need to say that it gives me great pleasure to accept, in the name of the town, this beautiful gift. Nothing has ever afforded me greater satisfaction than to see a fine library building rising on this corner, where the first schoolhouse in Oakham was built one hundred and forty years ago. It is appropriate that the library

should stand where the schoolhouse once stood, for the purpose of the library is to educate.

The citizens of the town are proud of this building, and deeply grateful to those by whose generosity it has been erected. Their names and their deeds will not be forgotten.

I will ask the Chairman, Deacon Allen, to say a few words on behalf of the Library Trustees.

DEACON ALLEN:

Mr. President—It is with the greatest pleasure that the Library Trustees, as servants of the town, and in its behalf, accept this beautiful gift, the "Fobes Memorial Library" building.

For more than a century the Fobes family has been active in promoting the interests of this town. Many of us still remember with gratitude and esteem Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Fobes. The welfare of the town and church was very dear to them both. At their decease they left a legacy of two thousand dollars to the church. When, a few years since, an organ was purchased for the church, Mr. Hiram Fobes was a generous contributor for this object.

I have in my possession a list of sixty-five names, proprietors of the Oakham Social Library, bearing the date of March 2, 1803. Rev. Daniel Tomlinson heads the list. Joseph Fobes, Esq., and Deacon Jesse Allen (ancestor of one branch of the Fobes family) are also among the number. These leading men of the town (many of whom were soldiers of the Revolution) performed well their work and have passed on to their reward; but they still live in this our glorious nation and in its many admirable institutions, among which is the free public library of to-day.

We erect memorials to the memory of our loved ones who have been taken from us. Better than monuments of bronze or granite is this beautiful library building, built out of the native stone of the town, to be used in this and

coming generations for the uplifting of the community,—a fitting memorial to a highly honorable New England family.

The names of Charles A. Fobes, Mrs. Celia E. Fobes, and Mrs. Harriet Fobes Gifford, through whose generosity this building is presented to the town, and the names of P. Ames Fobes, Hiram Fobes, and Hiram Nye Fobes, in whose memory it has been erected, will ever be held in grateful remembrance by the citizens and friends of Oakham.

THE PRESIDING OFFICER:

There are few Christian homes in America where the name of Francis N. Peloubet is not a household word. The nation honors him to-day as guide and inspirer through the far-reaching influence of his pen. But we of Oakham knew and loved him first in the more intimate relationship of teacher, of preacher, and of pastor. The exercises of the day could not have been quite complete without the benediction of his presence and the word of inspiration from his lips. That is the reason why the final message comes to us from Rev. Francis N. Peloubet, who will speak to us on

THE VILLAGE LIBRARY

MR. PELOUBET:

It gives me no small degree of pleasure to be present with you on this red-letter day of your history, and join with you in grateful recognition of the donors of this beautiful Library building.

I love to look back through the long vista of more than forty years and see enshrined as in sunset colors the familiar faces, too many to be even mentioned by name at this time, of those whose patience and love, deeds of kindness and words of sympathy for their young pastor and his wife, still shine

like stars in the sky of his past; and whose self-denials, and generous gifts, and labors of love for this church and for the good of the town fill the atmosphere around us as with the angel faces around Raphael's Madonna. There comes before me the vision of more than one hundred young men,—more than one-tenth of all the inhabitants,—who went to the front in defense of freedom. I see Dean Henry P. Wright of Yale, Major John B. Fairbank, and others, with whom I was almost a boy among boys, planting trees, making sidewalks, and doing Christian work, whom "it is a delight to know, a necessity to love, and a privilege to honor." The people of Oakham have been through all these years a part of my life and education; and I still feel

"Their being working in my own,
The footsteps of their life in mine."

The problem of the country town is one of the great problems of our nation. As we listen to the echoes of public opinion, we hear two conflicting notes.

Not many years ago in the town of Hamath in northern Syria a sacred stone was discovered with Hittite inscriptions throwing light upon that ancient race referred to in Genesis, but for many centuries unknown to history, so that many believed that the Bible references to them were mere legends. This stone was with great difficulty purchased for a museum, and was being carted away, when there occurred an unusual display of the November meteors. This frightened the Hamathites, and they hastened to send a delegation demanding the return of the stone. "For," said they, "God is so angry at our selling that sacred object that he is tearing the stars out of the sky and throwing them about in his wrath."

The old Turk who had made the bargain replied that they entirely misunderstood the meaning of the falling stars. So far from expressing God's anger, they meant that God

was so glad at their self-denial in yielding up the stone in the interests of knowledge, that he was setting off the fireworks of heaven to express his joy.

So one who looks only at certain aspects of the country town problem can easily imagine that God has forsaken the village and the farm, especially if he is doing nothing to make it better. When a woman moved into Oberlin expecting to find it a corner of heaven, and after a few months said in prayer meeting that she was disappointed, for to her mind Oberlin was no better than other places, President Finney rose and said, "Madam, what have you done to make Oberlin better since you came here?" The great preacher struck at the very root of pessimism.

Those who look upon the evils of the times from the curative standpoint,—as doctors look upon the vast army of diseases attacking the human body, and ministers look upon the sins and wrongs and crimes that are destroying the souls of men,—and who live for, and work for, and have their being in the forces divine and human which are at work to overcome and destroy the evils, are full of optimistic hope.

The donors of this library building, and of the land on which it stands, the donors of the clock on the church, and those other sons and daughters of Oakham who will "fly as a cloud and as doves to their windows" bearing books to fill the shelves, are not pessimistic as to the country town.

The true solution of the problem lies in three great centers of moral force:

The Church and its auxiliaries,
The Day School, raised to its highest power,
The Library, exerting its widest influence.

For each of these there is an ideal and a goal: and that village which keeps these ideals always in view, and works most diligently to reach the goal, will best solve the problem, and hasten the unfolding of its best possibilities. A states-

man declares that the first requisite in the steersman of a state, as of a ship, is a knowledge of its goal. This is true of every village, as of every city. It should see clearly its possibilities, and fix its attention on its ideal, its goal, and find the way to attain it.

The golden age of the village, of this village, is not in the past but in the future. I apply to this village, as I do sometimes to myself, the motto on the old Franklin Press at the Chicago World's Fair:

"Once I was young and spry
As any of my name;
Now I am old and slow,
But I get there just the same."

The town is not sitting by the wayside watching the world's express train of progress rushing by; it is on the train, yea, it is on the engine helping to make it go.

The fact that many leave the village and the farm, to go out into "the wide, wide world" is not a reason for discouragement, but just the contrary. Would that more children were raised on the farm to go as well as to stay! For there are two kinds of farm exports,—the produce of the fields, and young men and women. It is a good business to be in. Would that there were more of both kinds! It is no discredit to a farm that it has a surplus to send forth to help feed the world. It is the sign of a good, well-kept farm.

I saw at Silver Bay a copy of a map of the world hanging in the Y. M. C. A. building of Yale University, prepared by the younger Professor Wright, on which from a gilded nail marking New Haven, golden cords are stretched to every country where Yale students have gone as missionaries to aid those lands to become the kingdom of God.

In our village of Auburndale (a ward of the city of Newton) there hangs in our Sunday School rooms a similar framed map, with gold cords running from our school to

almost every country of the eastern world, showing where our gifts go, and where live and work for Christ one hundred and forty-five persons who have been or still are connected with our church and Sunday School. We rejoice in them. One of our best members, "Father-Endeavor Clark," has been around the world three times for the same purpose, and while we love to have him with us all the time, we have greater joy in the work he is doing for multitudes.

If in this Library you should hang a map of our country, and golden cords should run from this village to every place where some of your citizens have gone, and done good work for God and man, you would realize more clearly the value and power of the country church and town in fulfilling its mission.

Of course you are to keep your plant in perfect working condition so that those you send out shall be like the waters of the fabled Oriental fountain, each drop of which had the power to produce a similar fountain wherever it fell,

"And blessings follow in his steps, until where'er he goes,
The moral wastes begin to bud and blossom as the rose;"

and these whom you have trained come back like honey-laden bees to the hive whence they went forth, as we see to-day, helping you to do better work still in the days to come.

For every town and farm and home is a part of the great World University where we all get the most of our education. Jacobs used to say that God skimmed the church and put the cream into the Sunday School; but the business of the church and the town is to change even the skim-milk into cream.

In a little book on the Boer War, written by a grandson of ex-Secretary Foster when he was eight years old, and

by which he raised three hundred dollars for the Boers, is this story. A company of English soldiers were testing some new Lyddite guns. They fired twenty shot or shell at a herd of ten goats two miles away; and when they went to see the result, they found eleven goats,—one had been born during the firing. That is what is forever taking place during the conflicts of life, for all that are faithful, something is born during the firing. The men and women who went forth from this town come back to you larger, better, stronger, than when they went.

To accomplish these ends is the chief work of the new library. The ordinary uses will of course be fulfilled. I was asked not long ago to speak to a body of ministers upon the best later books for a minister's library, and I presented them under the ordinary classification of

Books of Knowledge, and
Books of Power.

One of the ministers, in making the usual criticisms, said that I should have added

Books of Rest.

There is need of all these circulated in the home, for home culture, books on home-making, and all the sciences and sources of knowledge that focus their rays upon home economics; and upon farm work and all its methods. So that home and farm will give an education equal to that of high school or college, and be so fascinating and interesting that the boys and girls will love to learn and to work there, and their lives will not be like the Nile which flows two thousand miles without a tributary, but like the Amazon which drains a continent for its waters. I have heard of a farm the owner of which advertised as its chief attraction that one could start from that farm and travel to every country in the world. This

library, rightly used, will give that value to every farm in Oakham.

But there are certain other uses of the library which have been developed within the last few years in the better libraries of the country, some of which have been mentioned by the previous speakers.

Not long ago I became acquainted with Mr. Bostwick, who is at the head of the circulating department of the New York City libraries, and later with one of the state librarians at Albany; and what they were doing was a revelation to me, though now the larger and better libraries throughout the country are doing the same things in a greater or lesser degree.

They send out sets of from twenty-five to one hundred books to any company of people who desire them and can obtain some one to take care of the books,—to schools, to women's clubs, men's clubs, police stations, waiting places of railroad men, the fire departments, and to the Sunday Schools. And they exchange them as often as desired.

The first instance of a Sunday School using the public library that I know, was that of St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City, when the Sunday School of that Church gave their library to the city, and used the city library instead. The only instances with which I am acquainted where this is done in Massachusetts are one in Somerville, and four in Newton, of which the Auburndale Ward is one. The Albany librarian tells me that the plan is more used in New York state, that the public libraries furnish religious books as well as others. In all cases the Sunday School selects its own books, and these should all be such as carry out the purpose of the Sunday School, that is, they must be character-forming books, inspiring and guiding to a better life.

There should be in the library, lists of books upon teaching, child-study, psychology; upon the subjects of the lessons

studied, upon missions, upon Biblical literature; lists for women's club study; lists for the farm and the home; lists especially of the best books for children's reading, such as are issued by the Pittsburg library, by the Worcester library and by those of other cities. These lists are needed, for the hardest thing I have had to do in my work is to find out the best books; and it is still harder for children.

There is a playground in London over the gate to which is written: "No admittance to adults unless accompanied by children." Not a far-away motto for a library, which should always lay emphasis on the children.

Pictures, photographs, stereoscopes, to send where needed, are a most valuable addition to a library, so that many an evening can be spent by the children of the day school and of the Sunday School in fireside travels to Palestine, and to every country included in their studies.

In these ways, and others which will continually suggest themselves as the work goes on, this library, so generously given, will become a perpetual blessing to the town. There are towns no larger than this, which have become immortal by the character of their people and their devotion to the great ideal and goal of the world, that it become a part of the kingdom of heaven.

Thus can you solve the problem of the country town. In the words of Robert Browning:

"The common problem—yours, mine, every one's—
Is not to fancy what were fair in life
Provided it could be; but finding first
What may be, then find how to make it fair
Up to our means—a very different thing.
My business is not to remake myself,
But make the absolute best of what God made."





READING ROOM, WITH DELIVERY HALL AND HISTORICAL ROOM ON THE RIGHT

DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDING

The material of the building is field-stone taken from the farms of Oakham. The doorsills are of granite; the window sills, doorjambs and lintel, chimney caps and finials, and the inscribed tablet over the entrance are of Indiana limestone. The lintel is a segment arch. The roof is covered with red slate, trimmed with copper ridge. The steps and platform are of concrete. All the rooms of the building are finished in kiln-dried quartered oak.

The building faces north. The front extends fifty-seven feet from east to west; the depth from the iron gate in front to the rear of the stack-room is forty-eight feet. In the vestibule, on the west side, is placed the memorial tablet. The door from the vestibule opens into a delivery room, the floor of which is of marble mosaic, with the Library monogram in the center. At the south end of this room is the librarian's counter for the distribution of books. Beyond this is the stack-room, and on the east side is the librarian's private room. On the east side of the delivery room is the reading room, lighted by large windows on three sides. This room is furnished with heavy oak table and chairs. On the walls are portraits of Hiram Fobes, Hiram Nye Fobes, and Charles Ames Fobes. Other portraits of members of the Fobes family will be added later. Opposite the reading room, and similar to it in size and arrangement, is the historical room, designed for the meetings of the Historical Society and for the display of antiquities and natural history specimens. This room has a large open fire-place and is furnished with cases protected by glass doors.

The Library is provided with a telephone, by courtesy of the Oakham and Coldbrook Telephone Company.

The stack-room is in the form of a semi-circle and contains seven stacks, to hold about five thousand volumes. The capacity may be doubled by the addition of a second

tier of stacks. The room is lighted by six windows and has a beautiful view toward the south and southeast.

THE HISTORICAL ROOM

This room was designed primarily for the use of the Oakham Historical Society. This Society was organized in 1899 through the influence of Mr. Charles M. Packard, who has long been a collector of articles having local historical interest. The Society has had several meetings at Mr. Packard's house and will greatly appreciate the convenient room now provided for it in the new Library.

Among the articles displayed in the historical room on Dedication Day, or presented to the Society later, are:—

Many choice pieces of old china loaned by Mr. John K. Parmenter of Oakham. These beautiful relics of former days have long been objects of veneration in the family, and are all still perfect. The most of them have come down to Mr. Parmenter from colonial times, through ancestors on his mother's side.

Linen sheet and towel spun and woven by Miss Irene Clapp, who was born July 4, 1799.

An ancient toddy glass and stick belonging to Miss Laura G. Burt.

A black woodchuck belonging to Mr. William Bullard.

A Welch Bible, presented by Mr. Peloubet.

Half-tone prints of royal horseshoes from the collection in Oakham Castle, England,¹ presented by Mr. G. Phillips, the Librarian of Oakham (England).

Bound volumes of the *Oakham Herald*, August 6, 1890, to June 18, 1902, presented by Mrs. O. D. Tottingham.

¹“We are somewhat perplexed in endeavoring to ascertain the origin of the Oakham custom. Popular tradition dates it from the time when Queen Elizabeth passed through Oakham on her way to visit the great Lord Treasurer, Burghley. The story goes that her horse cast a shoe in the street, and in order to mark the event the Queen there and then decreed that every Royal Personage or Peer of the Realm, on passing through Oakham for the first time, must give a horseshoe to the Lord of the Manor. It is quite certain, however, that the custom in vogue at Oakham is of a much earlier date.” G. Phillips, in *The Rutland Magazine*, October, 1906, p. 234.



DELIVERY HALL AND STACK ROOM, WITH HISTORICAL ROOM ON THE RIGHT

"An Elegiac Poem occasioned by the death of Dr. Spencer Field Esq. of Oakham, composed by Nathaniel Bolton of said town," November, 1801.

First printed Reports of the Selectmen of Oakham (1857 and 1858), presented by Mrs. M. M. Butterfield.

Records of the Washington Grenadiers from October 11, 1813, to September 1, 1829, with enlistments to April 30, 1834.

The sword of Major John B. Fairbank, presented by his sisters.

From the farm of the late Mr. Sumner Reed² have been received saddle-bags and stirrups, bellows, tongs, shovels, lantern, instruments for combing flax, also many ancient agricultural implements, and a collection of Indian relics.

The following articles were presented by Mr. William A. Burt:³

A collection of native birds and animals which he had mounted.

Indian relics, including arrow heads, hatchets, chisels, mortars and pestles, found by him in Oakham, mostly on the Pine Plain.

Also two guns (1) one brought from the battle of Bunker Hill by Seth Caldwell of Barre and sold by him to Mr. Stephen Lincoln, and (2) one which formerly belonged to Captain Warner of New Braintree, a famous Indian scout, and with which he shot the Indian Black Wolf, who had followed him with murderous intent from Canada to his New Braintree home. This gun was purchased by Mr. Burt nearly forty years ago from Mr. Job Simmons.

There are also deposited in the Historical Room:

Records of the Oakham Library Association, the Oakham Lyceum, the Franklin Literary Society, the Oakham Soldiers' Union, the Oakham Young Men's Club, the Oakham Village Improvement Society, the Oakham Historical Society, and other books and papers relating to the history of the town.

² Mr. Sumner Reed was son of Silas Reed, Jr., and Polly Horr. He lived in the house built by his grandfather in 1806, till his death, February 2, 1908.

³ William Alfred Burt was the son of the late Alfred Ely Burt and brother of Mrs. Henry P. Wright of New Haven, Conn. He died September 4, 1908.

The following is from a letter of Mr. George K. Tufts, in answer to an inquiry about the Warner gun:

"The Mr. Warner referred to was Capt. Eleazer Warner, who came to reside in New Braintree in 1730 and died there in 1776 at the age of ninety. His home was a portion of the farm now owned by Luther Crawford and a portion of the original house constitutes a part of one of the buildings now on the place. It was built of three inch plank placed upright and battened. He was a famous scout in the border warfare. He was the great grandfather of Dr. Lucius Paige, historian of Hardwick, who writes of him in that history as follows:

'He very early entered the military service of his country, and was assigned to duty on the frontiers; was for many years stationed at Brookfield, first as private, then sergeant, ensign and lieutenant in the company commanded by Capt. Samuel Wright of Rutland. Soon after his removal to New Braintree and while yet in the service of the Government, he went to Canada to effect an exchange of prisoners. While there an Indian became offended and followed him through the wilderness to his home. According to the family tradition as I received it from his eldest daughter, my grandmother, after the Indian had lurked about the house for a few days, Capt. Warner went into the forest with his musket. He soon discovered his enemy, who stepped behind a tree, and he (Warner) dropped by the side of a log. He then adopted a common stratagem, placing his hat on a stick and cautiously elevating it above the log, as if to reconnoitre. Almost instantly a bullet passed through it, and he sprang upon his feet. The Indian was rushing forward with his scalping-knife in hand; but his race was soon ended, and his body was consigned to a lily pond between the road and the river, about a half mile east of the Old Furnace.'

Whether the gun you refer to was the same which Capt. Warner used in disposing of the Indian, I cannot say. I do not see how it could have been lost to the family, although such articles were not then, as now, held of value for their associations."

Mr. Job Simmons gives the story of the gun as follows:

Capt. Warner was in the French and Indian War. An Indian chief challenged any one belonging to our forces to single combat. Capt. Warner accepted the challenge and killed the Indian. His brother, Black Wolf, swore eternal vengeance. Soon after the close of the war, Warner, at his home in New Braintree, happened one morning to catch sight of an Indian, whom he recognized as Black Wolf, skulking near his house. Calling to his wife for his gun and best flint, he was obliged to drop behind a large fallen tree near the house. The Indian was hiding behind a tree nearby, where he watched for some time to get a shot at Warner. After a while Warner carefully raised his cap on the ramrod of his gun and the Indian promptly sent a ball through it. Warner pretended to be mortally wounded. His kicking about deceived the Indian, who soon came forward to finish the job and take off his scalp, when Warner jumped up. The Indian, seeing that there was no escape, folded his arms and fell dead, pierced with the ball from Warner's gun.

Warner, fearing that if Black Wolf's fate was known, other Indians would murder him if possible, took his body and every vestige and sunk them in Lily Pond in the west part of New Braintree and kept the secret till a short time before his death.

About 1850 Emory Warner, a grandson of the Captain, being about to move to Worcester, gave the Old Gun to Mr. Simmons who had the lock changed and used the gun to hunt with for several years. About 1870 he sold it to Mr. William A. Burt. Last summer Mr. Burt had the gun thoroughly repaired and the flintlock replaced.

ADDENDA

GENEALOGY OF THE OAKHAM BRANCH OF THE FOBES FAMILY.

1. John Fobes came from England not long after 1630 and settled in Duxbury. He married Constant Mitchell, sister of Experience Mitchell, who came from England in the third ship Ann in 1623, and who removed from Plymouth to Duxbury in 1631. John Fobes died in Bridgewater in 1660.¹

¹ Mitchell, *History of Bridgewater*, page 159, says that John Fobes died in 1661, that his widow married John Briggs of Portsmouth, Rhode Island, in 1662, and that his son John died at George Allen's in Sandwich in 1661. In the *Records of the Colony of Plymouth* there are two entries regarding John Fobes:

(1) Vol. III, p. 200, June 13, 1660. "In answere unto a request made to the Court by the Widdow Vobes requesting some supply of land in respect unto the conditions of an indenture made betwixt Mr. Isacke Allerton and her husband, John Vobes lately deseased, the Court gives liberty that any for her may looke out some land for her suppiy and a competency wilbee granted and confirmed unto her."

(2) Vol. IV, p. 18, June 3, 1662. "Captaine Willett is appointed by the Court to purchase lands of the Indians, which is granted unto such that were servants and others that are ancient freemen," etc. "Their names are as followeth:" (Here are given twenty-four names, among which is "John Vobes.")

Mr. Fobes was evidently an "indented servant" to Isacke Allerton; that is, he had bound himself to him, in England, as a servant, in order to secure passage for himself and family to America. Having rendered the service required, he was now one of those "that were servants," and to whom land was to be granted. His name might still stand in 1662 as representing the family to which the obligation was still due, though he himself had died in 1660.

2. Deacon Edward Fobes, second son of John and Constant, was born in Bridgewater in 1651. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Howard. Deacon Fobes died in 1732.

3. John Fobes, second child of Deacon Edward and Elizabeth, was born in Bridgewater in 1679. He married Abigail Robinson in 1704. Mr. Fobes died in 1725, and his wife in 1762.

4. Josiah Fobes, sixth child of John and Abigail, was born in Bridgewater, September 6, 1716, and in 1739 married Freelove, (born October 11, 1718) daughter of Captain Josiah Edson. Mr. Fobes died in 1794, at the age of seventy-eight, and his wife in 1811 at the age of ninety-three. His second son was Rev. Perez Fobes, who was graduated at Harvard College in 1762, and was settled in the ministry at Raynham, Mass., for nearly forty years. In 1777 he served as Chaplain in the Continental Army. Perez Fobes was Professor of Natural Philosophy at Brown University and was at one time Vice President of the institution.

5. Joseph Fobes, tenth child of Josiah and Freelove, was born in Bridgewater, March 12, 1758. He married Susanna, daughter of Captain John Ames, in 1782, and moved to Oakham in 1792, where he died January 27, 1827, aged sixty-nine. Mrs. Susanna Fobes, his wife, died August 12, 1835, aged seventy-three.

6. Peres Fobes, only child of Joseph and Susanna, was born in Bridgewater, April 11, 1783. He came to Oakham with his father in 1792. He was married to

- (1) Alice, daughter of Alpheus Stone, November 3, 1808. She died August 17, 1813, aged twenty-three.
- (2) Melissa, daughter of Timothy Nye, August 11, 1816. She died November 1, 1829, aged thirty-eight.
- (3) Mrs. Lucy Waterman, daughter of Alpheus Stone and sister of his first wife, June 2, 1831. She died November 9, 1859, at Cleveland, Ohio.

Children :

- (1) Mary P., born September 1, 1809.
- (2) Joseph, born August 4, 1811.
- (3) Susan Alice, born June 4, 1813; died December 15, 1813.
- (4) Alice Stone, born August 12, 1817; died August 24, 1817.
- (5) John, born April 27, 1818.
- (6) Timothy Nye, born July 12, 1820.
- (7) Albert Howard, born September 5, 1822; died May 8, 1844, on board ship off Mobile, Alabama.
- (8) Peres Ames, born September 7, 1824.
- (9) William Allen, born March 27, 1827.
- (10) Hiram, born September 5, 1829.

Mr. Peres Fobes died at Oakham, February 6, 1852, aged sixty-eight years.

Mary P. Fobes was married May 3, 1832, to Frederick A. Potter, son of Dr. Cheney Potter of North Brookfield.

Children :

- (1) John Cheney, born in North Brookfield, March 4, 1833; boot and shoe manufacturer; senior partner in the firm of Potter, White & Bailey, Boston, Mass. He was married, October 1, 1857, to Lucy Bailey of Newton. Children: Frank Cheney, born May 28, 1860; Albert Bailey, born May 23, 1864; Kate, born October 15, 1866.
- (2) Albert Fobes, born in St. Albans, Vt., April 3, 1842; Sergeant Forty-fourth Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry; died at Newbern, N. C., January 29, 1863.

Mr. Frederick A. Potter died December 31, 1872. Mrs. Mary Fobes Potter, his wife, died January 2, 1853, at North Brookfield.

Joseph Fobes was married to Nancy Burt, daughter of Eli Burt of Oakham, May 1, 1836.

Children:

- (1) Susan Ames, born May 2, 1838, in Barre; died August 20, 1859, in Oakham.
- (2) Charles Burt, born March 25, 1842, in Oakham; died March 30, 1849.
- (3) Alice Stone, born August 2, 1853; died April 9, 1854.
- (4) George Burt, born April 29, 1856; died December 15, 1856.

Mr. Joseph Fobes died March 22, 1877. Mrs. Nancy B. Fobes, his wife, died June 8, 1885.

John Fobes was married March 21, 1844, to Julia A. Wood, daughter of James Wood of New Braintree, and had one son:

John Blake, born June 4, 1845; went to Marion, Iowa, in 1861; enlisted in Company H, Twentieth Iowa Volunteer Infantry; discharged on account of ill health, and returned to Massachusetts; lived for over thirty years in New Braintree, where he was a farmer and dealer in wood. He was married to Martha E. Sampson, daughter of Frederick Dwight Sampson of West Brookfield. Children: Harry W., born in West Brookfield, May 15, 1868; Alice Adams, born in New Braintree, June 8, 1879.

Mr. John Fobes died in Petersham, October 5, 1846. After his death Mrs. Julia Wood Fobes lived fifty years and was twice married. She died in New Braintree, March 19, 1900.

Timothy Nye Fobes was married April 14, 1853, to Maria Clapp, daughter of Silas Clapp of Oakham.

Children:

- (1) Ella Sybil, born September 25, 1854; married to Sanford Henry Bullard, son of Joel Bullard. Children: William Harrison, born May 15, 1883; Milton Ames, born March 10, 1885; Minnie Fobes, born December 16, 1886; Edwin Hiram, born July 14, 1889; Alice May, born August 30, 1890.
- (2) Henry Clapp, born December 13, 1858.
- (3) Mary, born August 24, 1860; was married to J. Paul Weixler, Jr., of Worcester, October 30, 1884; died November 18, 1898.
- (4) Frank Nye, born March 25, 1869.

Mr. Timothy N. Fobes died January 18, 1902. His wife, Mrs. Maria Clapp Fobes, died March 1, 1905.

Peres Ames Fobes was married September 18, 1850, to Elizabeth Gates of Petersham, Mass.

Children:

- (1) William Elliot, born at Oakham, December 14, 1851; died at Marion, Iowa, October 7, 1852.
- (2) Charles Ames, born at Marion, May 12, 1859; was Post Master and general store keeper at Petersham; died at Kingston, Jamaica, March 11, 1905.
- (3) A third son was born at Marion, March 13, 1863, and died June 1 of the same year.

Mr. P. Ames Fobes died at Oakham, November 9, 1866; Mrs. Elizabeth Gates Fobes died at Petersham, May 18, 1882.

William Allen Fobes was married November 8, 1853, to Lucena Almeda Crawford, daughter of Alexander Crawford of Oakham.

Children:

- (1) William Crawford, born March 29, 1855; died September 15, 1855.
- (2) Richard, born at Lebanon, Maine, September 8, 1858; was a civil engineer. He was appointed in 1887 Superintendent of Sewers for the City of Worcester and held this office till his death on February 5, 1891. During his superintendency the city began to purify its sewage, and the Worcester Sewage Purification Works were installed.
- (3) Bertha Melissa, born December 10, 1859, at Lebanon; died in Worcester, May 9, 1907.
- (4) Caroline, born at Kittery, Maine, July 22, 1861; married Alfred R. Baker of Chesterfield, Mass., June 4, 1885. Mr. Baker died October 14, 1886.
- (5) Arthur Alexander, born at Oakham, January 3, 1864; is a civil engineer; was employed by the City of Worcester for about eight years; went to Pittsfield, Mass., in 1892, and was engineer of Board of Public Works for fifteen years. About a year ago he established an office in Pittsfield. He was married to Elizabeth Taylor, daughter of Henry Taylor, of Providence, R. I., September 17, 1889, and has had four children: Mary Lucena, born October 12, 1890, died October 22, 1890; Elizabeth, born August 19, 1893; Edith Taylor, born June 2, 1897; Bertha May, born June 24, 1907.
- (6) Hiram, born at Scituate, R. I., October 19, 1865; was graduated as Bachelor of Arts at Yale College, June 29, 1892, and received the degree of LL.B. at the New York Law School in 1895. He is a lawyer in New York City, and is Head of the Real Estate Department in the office of Merrill & Rogers. He was married, September 25, 1902, to Carrie May Edwards, daughter of Oliver Edwards of Chesterfield, Mass., and has one child, Edith Crawford, born November 9, 1903.



- (7) Emily Kimball, born February 18, 1868, at Halifax, Mass.; resides with her father at 55 Coburn Avenue, Worcester, Mass.
- (8) William Allen, born August 1, 1870, at Halifax; is a stationary engineer, employed by the Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Rev. William A. Fobes resides at 55 Coburn Avenue, Worcester. His wife, Mrs. Lucena Fobes, died April 30, 1904.

Hiram Fobes was married, September 29, 1870, to Celia Elizabeth Brayton, daughter of David Brayton of Smithfield, R. I.

Children:

- (1) Alice Brayton, born December 31, 1871; died in infancy.
- (2) Herbert Brayton, born December 7, 1873; died in infancy.
- (3) Harriet Brayton, born August 26, 1875; was married, November 21, 1895, by Rev. A. Z. Conrad of the Old South Church, Worcester, to Albert Liscomb Gifford, son of George D. Gifford of Worcester, and has two children: Dorothy Brayton, born in Fanwood, N. J., September 26, 1896; and Elizabeth Liscomb, born in New York City, January 1, 1903. Harriet's home is now in Tarrytown, N. Y.
- (4) Hiram Nye, born August 8, 1876; graduated as Bachelor of Arts *cum laude* at Harvard University in 1901. He studied one year in the Harvard Medical School, and in the autumn of 1902 entered the Medical School of Johns Hopkins University, but on account of illness he was not long able to continue his studies. He returned to his home in Worcester, where he died March 8, 1905.
- (5) William Henry, born June 23, 1878; died in infancy.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO THE FIRM OF AMES & FOBES

SELECTMEN'S APPROVAL OF MR. FOBES AS A RETAILER OF SPIRITOUS LIQUORS

OAKHAM, Aug. 21, 1792.

We do approve of Joseph Fobes as a Retailer of spirituous liquor in the town of Oakham for the year ensuing, & we do hereby recommend the said Joseph Fobes: as a person of a sober life & conversation suitably qualified & provided for the exercise of such an employment; & firmly attached to the Constitution & laws of this commonwealth.

JESSE ALLEN	} <i>Selectmen</i>
EBEN'ER NYE	
DAN'L PARMENTER	
SILAS BULLARD	
JAMES PRESNO	

SELECTMEN'S APPROVAL OF MR. FOBES AS AN INNHOLDER

OAKHAM, Aug. 20, 1793.

We the subscribers, selectmen of the town of Oakham do approve of Mr. Joseph Fobes as an Innholder in said town of Oakham for the year ensuing; and we do hereby Recomend the said Joseph Fobes as a person of sober life & conversation & suitably qualified & provided for the exercise of such an employment, & firmly attached to the constitution & laws of this Commonwealth.

JESSE ALLEN	} <i>Selectmen</i>
WM CRAWFORD	
SILAS BULLARD	
DAN'L PARMENTER	

MR. AMES'S FIRST ADVERTISEMENT FOR WORKMEN FOR THE
SPRINGFIELD ARMORY

ARMOURER'S DEPARTMENT.

Wanted to hire, 20 men, skilled in the Armourer's Business, to whom generous wages will be given, and they may draw their pay every month. A ration and a half per day will be allowed them. Also wanted, 10 active young fellows, as apprentices to the above business. Inquire of the Printer hereof, of Joseph Fobes of Oakham, of Elijah Packard of Greenwich, or of the subscriber in Springfield.

DAVID AMES.

Oct. 1, 1794.

Worcester Spy, October 8, 1794.

THE PROPERTY OF AMES & FOBES OFFERED FOR SALE

TO BE SOLD,

and may be entered upon the middle of Apr. next,

A FARM, LYING IN OAKHAM, in the county of Worcester, on the post road from Boston to Barre & Petersham. The situation of it for a Publick House, need not be mentioned, as it is fully known, by every one who has travelled that road, & is now a noted Tavern. Said Farm contains 365 acres of land, and is well accomadated with mowing, Pasture, Tillage land, and Wood land, & has a most excellent spring of water, brought into the house, which is good for washing & other uses. There are three good dwelling houses & 4 good barns, & a new & good saw mill, & a Blacksmith's shop, with other necessary buildings. One or two years payday will be given, if desired, with good security. For further particulars, inquire of Capt. John Ames, of Bridgewater, or David Ames of Springfield, or the subscriber on the premises.

JOSEPH FOBES.

OAKHAM, Feb. 29, 1796.

From the *Spy*, March 9, 1796.

THE PARTNERSHIP OF AMES & FOBES DISSOLVED

NOTICE.

The partnership of Ames & Fobes, joint traders at Oakham, being this day mutually dissolved; they call on all those, who have any demands, to call and receive their pay: & those, who are indebted, by Note or Book account, to make immediate payment, or they will be put into the hands of an Attorney for Collection.

OAKHAM, Jan. 10, 1798.

From the *Spy*, Jan. 24, 1798.

FIRST MAIL STAGE ON THE OLD TURNPIKE

NEW MAIL STAGE.

The subscriber proposes to run a stage coach from Worcester, through Paxton, Rutland, Oakham, New Braintree, Hardwick, Greenwich, Pelham, Shutesbury, Amherst, and Hadley to Northampton, once a week, for the accomadation of passengers; and respectfully solicits the patronage of the Publick. He will leave Worcester every Wednesday, at 9 o'clock A. M. and arrive at Northampton every Thursday afternoon: returning, leave Northampton every Friday, at 8 o'clock A. M. and arrive at Hardwick the same day: leave Hardwick every Tuesday, at 8 o'clock A. M. and arrive at Worcester in season to meet the Boston Stage of the same day. Said stage will intersect the Boston Stage at Worcester and the Hartford, Hanover, and Albany Stages at Northampton, and will pass the celebrated mineral waters in Shutesbury.—Fare, five cents per mile, and 25 lbs. Baggage allowed to a passenger: 125 lb. extra Baggage equal to a passenger.

CYRUS STOCKWELL.

May 26, 1818.

From the *Massachusetts Spy or Worcester Gazette*, Wednesday, May 27, 1818.

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO OAKHAM LIBRARIES

ASSESSMENT ON THE PROPRIETORS OF THE OAKHAM SOCIAL LIBRARY.

At a legal meeting of the proprietors of the Social Library in Oakham, duly warned under the Fourth Article, on Tuesday, the second day of March, A.D. 1803, voted to raise and assess all the shares belonging to said Library the sum of twenty-five cents per share, to enlarge said Library.

Number of proprietors in said Library are sixty-five, at twenty-five per share is sixteen dollars and twenty-five cents.

		Share	Cents	
Rev.	Daniel Tomlinson,	I	25	x
Dea.	Jesse Allen,	I	25	x
	Washington Allen,	I	25	x
	Lewis Abbot,	I	25	x
	Stuart Black,	I	25	
Lieut.	James Black,	I	25	
Capt.	John Boyd,	I	25	
Capt.	Silas Bullard,	I	25	
	John Burbank,	I	25	x
	Moses Bullard,	I	25	
	Samuel Brimhall,	I	25	x
	Thomas Barrows,	I	25	
	Moses Brown,	I	25	x
Capt.	John Crawford,	I	25	
Capt.	William Crawford,	I	25	x
	Joseph Chaddock,	I	25	x
Ensign	Luther Conant,	I	25	x
	Samuel Caldwell,	I	25	x
Ensign	Abijah Cutler,	I	25	x
Dea.	James Dean,	I	25	
Dea.	Samuel Davis,	I	25	x
Dea.	Jonas Eaton,	I	25	x
	Jonas Eaton, Jr.,	I	25	x
	Benjamin Eaton,	I	25	x
	Skelton Felton,	I	25	x
Dr.	Spencer Field, Executor,	I	25	x
Dr.	John Field,	I	25	x
	Peter Fitts,	I	25	x
Esq.	Joseph Fobes,	I	25	
Lieut.	Ebenezer Foster,	I	25	
Lieut.	Asa French,	I	25	x
	John French, paid to Mr. Fitts,	I	25	x
	Elijah Freeman,	I	25	
	Matthew Galut,	I	25	
	David Goodale, Jr.,	I	25	x

		Share	Cents	
	Joel Jones,	I	25	x
	Richard Kelley,	I	25	
	Silas Knight,	I	25	x
	Amos Keith,	I	25	
	Losen Lyon,	I	25	
	Luther Marsh,	I	25	x
	Jonas McRoo,	I	25	x
	Crocker Nye,	I	25	
Lieut.	John Patrick,	I	25	x
Lieut.	James Pershow,	I	25	
	Rufus Parmenter,	I	25	x
	Daniel Parmenter,	I	25	x
	Daniel Parmenter, Jr.,	I	25	x
	Luther Rice,	I	25	
	John Robinson,	I	25	x
	Eleazer Spooner,	I	25	
Corp.	Moses Spooner,	I	25	
	Isaac Stone,	I	25	
	Alpheus Stone,	I	25	
	Frederick M. Stone,	I	25	
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		\$16.25		

A true assessment according to the vote of Corporation.

Pr

JOSEPH CHADDOCK	} Committee and Assessors
RUFUS PARMENTER	
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OAKHAM, March 1st, 1804.

To Lieut. Asa French of Oakham, Collector of the Social Library tax of the town of Oakham, we order and direct you to collect the within tax of the several persons within named, the sum of sixteen dollars and twenty-five cents for the purpose of enlarging the Social Library, and pay in the same to Mr. Peter Fitts or his successor in said office as Treasurer, on or before the tenth day of May next.

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OAKHAM, March 1st, 1804.

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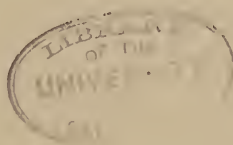
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